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SPECIAL REPORT

Deception and Democracy

The Selling of the Iraq War

Spencer Ackerman and John B. Judis

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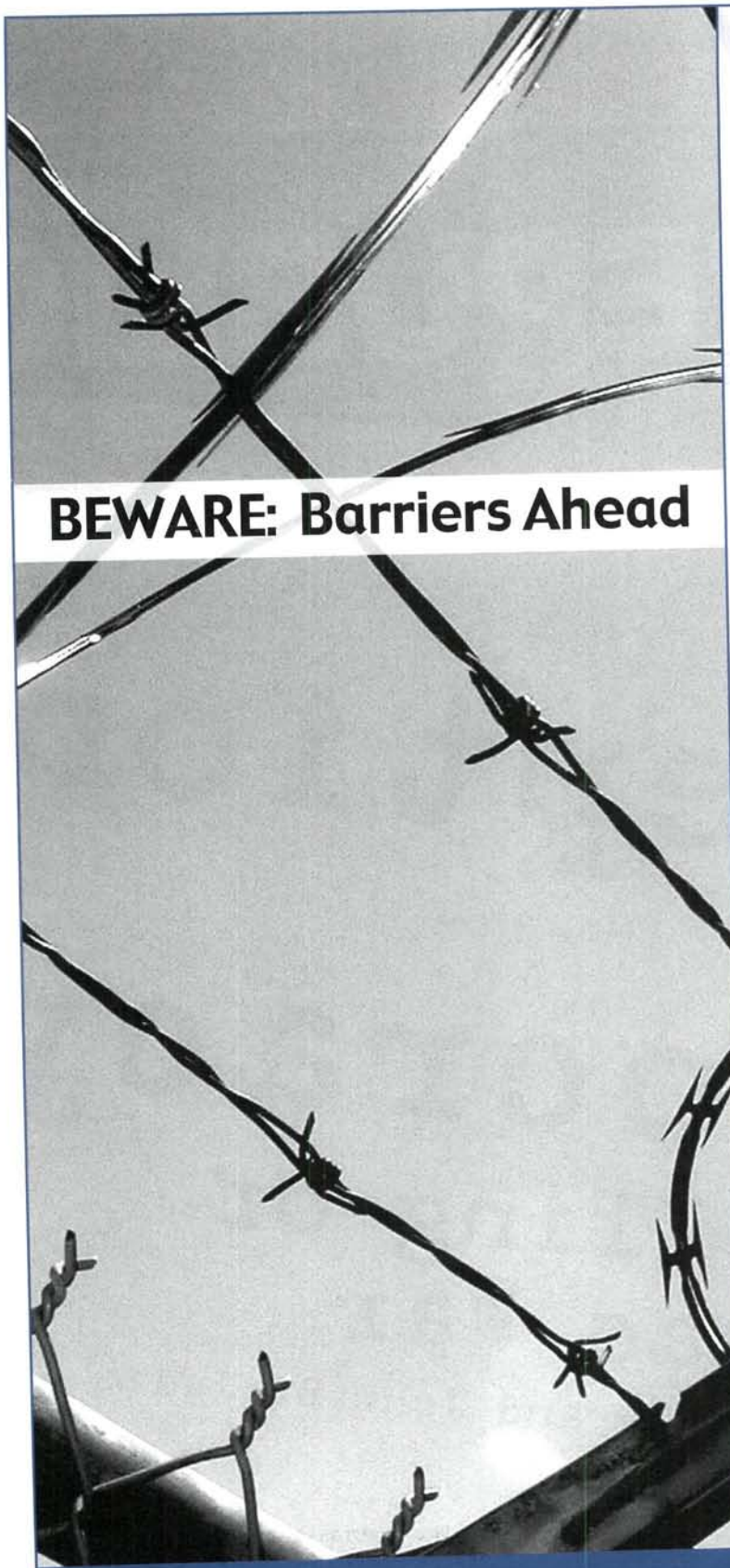

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A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

JUNE 30, 2003 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,615 VOLUME 228

Cover Story

Spencer Ackerman and John B. Judis **14** **The First Casualty** The United States may still find chemical and biological weapons in Iraq. But the damage is already done. The Bush administration grossly exaggerated Iraq's nuclear program and its ties to Al Qaeda. And, in so doing, it misled the American people about the most important decision a government can make. A special investigation into the selling of the war.

Peter Beinart **6** **TRB | Here They Go Again** The White House's response to allegations of WMD misinformation? More misinformation.

The Editors **7** **Reality Check** Defending the war, honestly.

Politics & the World

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Torie Clarke v. Lawrence F. Kaplan, &c.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Habermas and Derrida v. the United States, &c.

Hassan Fattah **10** **Baghdad Dispatch: Flash Point** Will Paul Bremer tolerate a free press?

Janine Zacharia **11** **Immunity Shot** The coming U.S.–International Criminal Court train wreck.

Yossi Klein Halevi **12** **Tekoa Dispatch: Culture War** Settlers v. the Israeli right.

Jonathan Cohn **38** **BRASÍLIA DIARIST | Sexual Healing**

Books & the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann **26** **FILMS | The Chicken or the Egg** *Love the Hard Way* and *The Hard Word* rework two film-plot staples: the cross-class love affair and the heist.

Jackson Lears **27** **Sanctimonies** *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* by James A. Morone

Ingrid D. Rowland **32** **Love and Money** *Trying Neaira: The True Story of a Courtesan's Scandalous Life in Ancient Greece* by Debra Hamel

Don Bogen **34** **POEM** | *Immediate Song*

Richard Jenkyns **35** **The Air Painter** *Turner* by James Hamilton

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CORRESPONDENCE

STAYING POWER

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN'S COMMENTARY on the Bush administration's exit strategy in Iraq is off the mark ("Early Exit," May 26). Senior members of the administration have repeatedly affirmed our long-term commitment to Iraq. There is not now, nor has there ever been, a deadline or a timetable. Our military forces and our civilian leaders will remain in Iraq as long as necessary to enable the Iraqi people to govern themselves and provide for their own security; they will not stay one day longer nor leave one day sooner.

The number of American and coalition military forces required to secure the peace and accomplish the mission will change over time. General Tommy Franks and his commanders continually evaluate the situation on the ground to determine the proper level and mix of forces necessary for the missions at hand. Anyone who claims they can predict what those levels will be at any point in the future—next week, next month, or this fall—is certainly guessing. The administration has no "magic number" for the forces it will take nor is there an "end date" for mission accomplishment. That is a message on which Donald Rumsfeld has been nothing if not straightforward.

VICTORIA CLARKE
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Public Affairs
The Pentagon
Arlington, Virginia

LEGAL EAGLES

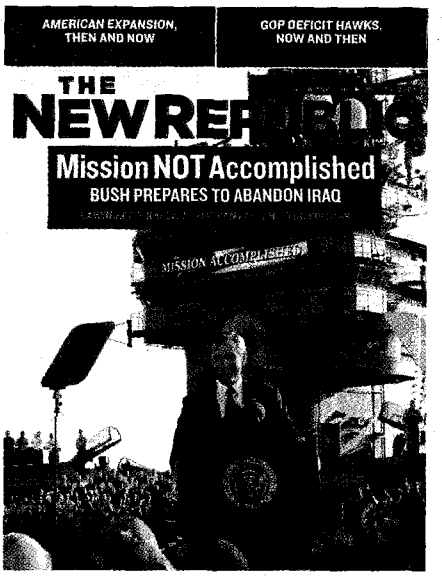
JEFFREY ROSEN'S CLAIM THAT CONgress has proved to be "a far more vigorous defender of liberty and privacy than the courts" post–September 11, 2001, is edgy and contrarian but also silly ("Privacy Pleas," May 26). Most notably, it was Congress that overwhelmingly enacted the USA Patriot Act, an act that Rosen has justifiably criticized in the past. Some key senators have indeed reined in—at least temporarily—the Terrorism Information Awareness Program and staved off new domestic subpoena capabilities for the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department. But, since the only public supporters of those extreme measures are on the writing staffs of late-night talk shows, Rosen's praise for the Senate seems a bit much. In the event of another major terrorist attack, Congress can be expected to rubber-stamp John Ashcroft's wish list.

In contrast, judges have issued courageous and eloquent rulings on such matters as the Jose Padilla and Yasir Hamdi cases, the Justice Department's interpretation of the Patriot Act's Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act provisions, and the government's blanket secrecy policy for detained foreign nationals. Rosen is right that some of those rulings have been overturned on appeal, but, to date, it's much easier to point to particular judges than to legislators who have demonstrated genuine bravery in standing up for liberty at a time when the public is understandably preoccupied with security.

GREG ANRIG JR.
Vice President, Programs
The Century Foundation
Co-editor
THE WAR ON OUR FREEDOMS: CIVIL LIBERTIES IN AN AGE OF TERRORISM
New York, New York

EXPECT THE EXPECTED

I WAS MORBIDLY AMUSED TO READ that the editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC are shocked—shocked!—to discover that the Bush administration's commitment to democracy and reconstruction in Iraq has turned out to be as paper-thin as its previous commitment to the same goals in Afghanistan ("Mission Incomplete," May 26). Reading TNR during the buildup to the war was more than a little disorienting, since stories trumpeting the rightness and necessity of the war ran side by side with the usual stream of stories documenting the cynicism and mendacity of this administration. One couldn't help wondering if the editors were actually aware that the war was being run by the same people whose untrustworthiness they were so clearly demonstrating elsewhere in the magazine.


AMERICAN EXPANSION, THEN AND NOW
GOP DEFICIT HAWKS, NOW AND THEN
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Mission NOT Accomplished
BUSH PREPARES TO ABANDON IRAQ
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Of course, it's unambiguously a good thing that the world is—apparently—rid of Saddam Hussein. In every other respect, the aftermath of the war is confirming most of the fears of those who were skeptical about it. As for TNR, one has to wonder if the editors were genuinely blindsided by the administration's "what-me-worry?" attitude toward postwar reconstruction or whether they pretty much knew this was how the war would play out but chose not to say anything about it for fear of compromising their pro-war stance.

TYCHO MANSON
Toronto, Ontario
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THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 228, Number 25, Issue 4,615, June 30, 2003. (Printed in the United States on June 19, 2003.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated April 21 & 28, July 7 & 14, July 28 & August 4, August 18 & 25, September 8 & 15, October 13 & 20, December 1 & 8, and December 29, 2003 through January 12, 2004) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Mandy Hansen at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions: $79.97, foreign: $119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, $99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues: $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2003 by The New Republic, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest, Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. For reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: letters@tnr.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

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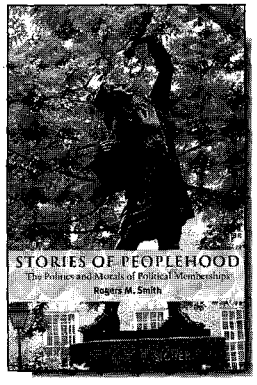

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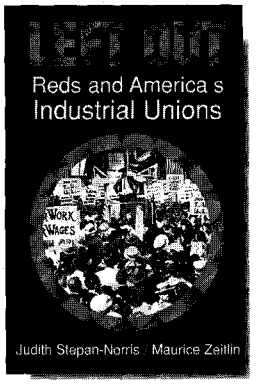

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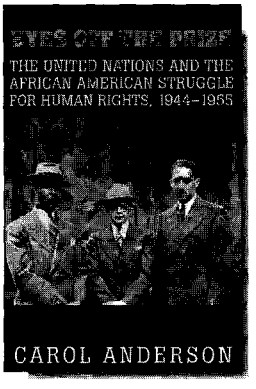

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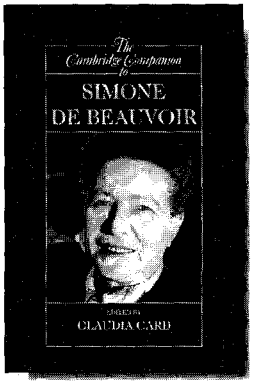

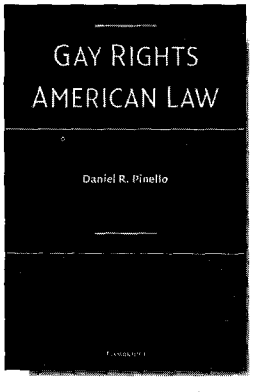

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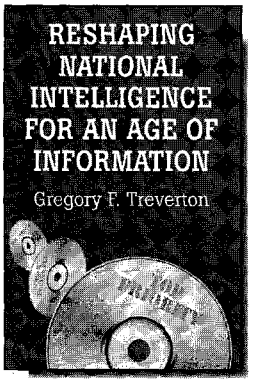

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Here They Go Again

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

THINK THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION is chastened by the growing scandal over its exaggeration of the Iraq threat? Think again. Thus far, the White House has responded in three ways—all dishonest and all true to form.

Its first response to the failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq has been, well, to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. On May 21, Bush officials leaked to *The New York Times* that the United States had discovered two trailers that could only have been used to manufacture biological weapons. "The experts who have crawled over this again and again can come up with no other plausible legitimate use," said a senior official. A few days later, President Bush claimed the United States had "found the weapons of mass destruction. ... For those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong. We found them." But that's highly misleading. The trailers contained no "weapons," and tests uncovered no biological agents. American intelligence officials had simply concluded that the trailers had no other plausible function. That is, until a week later, when other experts with access to the trailers disagreed. One intelligence analyst told the *Times* that the initial findings were "a rushed job and looks political." In other words, the Bush administration seems to have rebutted allegations of biased analysis and deceptive rhetoric with more biased analysis and deceptive rhetoric.

Then there is the administration's second response: If the White House hyped the Iraq threat, so did everyone else. As Ari Fleischer put it on June 9, "What the president has said ... has been the longstanding view of numerous people, not only in this country, not only in this administration, but around the world, including at the United Nations." But that's not exactly true. Yes, everyone agreed Saddam Hussein had not accounted for his chemical and biological stockpiles. But those stockpiles weren't, by themselves, the basis for war. The administration's case rested on linking them to the far more frightening prospect of an Iraqi nuclear weapon, which Vice President Dick Cheney claimed Saddam would acquire "fairly soon." And, on that score, there was heated debate. During the Clinton administration, as John Prados wrote in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, intelligence assessments of Iraq's nuclear program were far more cautious than they became in 2002. And, on March 7, the International Atomic Energy Agency's Mohamed ElBaradei reported that, "after three months of intrusive inspections, we have to date found no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq." To which Cheney responded, "I think Mr. ElBaradei frankly is wrong."

The other key element in the White House's case for war was Iraq's supposed links to Al Qaeda, which both explained how Saddam could deliver his unconventional weapons to the United States and connected Iraq in the public mind to September 11, 2001. And that was even more controversial. In October 2002, French President Jacques Chirac said, "To my knowledge, no proof has been found, or in any case officially made public, of a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda." John Edwards made the same point this January: "I've certainly not seen any compelling evidence of an Al Qaeda connection as a member of the Intelligence Committee."

So much for strategies one and two. Indeed, administration officials already seem to be laying the groundwork for a third: Find a scapegoat. And their leading candidate is CIA Director George Tenet. Questioned on June 8 about alleged administration disinformation, Condoleezza Rice responded, "You had a director of Central Intelligence who produced an estimate that said this regime had weapons of mass destruction." Challenged about his February 5 presentation to the United Nations, Colin Powell replied, "That statement was vetted thoroughly by all of the [CIA] analysts who are responsible for this account." Administration officials even planted a June 12 *Washington Post* story that claimed the CIA had not adequately informed the White House of its doubts that Iraq had tried to buy enriched uranium from Niger. "Maybe someone knew down in the bowels of the agency," said Rice when asked about the uranium hoax on NBC's "Meet the Press," "but no one in our circles knew that there were doubts and suspicions that this might be a forgery."

Blaming Tenet for shoddy intelligence focuses the scandal on technical competence rather political abuse. And it dovetails with GOP efforts to make sure congressional investigations into the matter are secret and narrowly focused on the intelligence agencies. As Porter Goss, Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, recently put it, "I'm not going into what the customer did with the intelligence."

But that gets it exactly wrong. As Spencer Ackerman and John B. Judis detail, the "customers"—in particular, the Pentagon and the vice president's office—weren't passively receiving shoddy intelligence; they were *demanding* shoddy intelligence to bolster their case for war (see "The First Casualty," page 14). If Tenet bears any blame, it is for not resisting this effort more fiercely. But, when he did, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz simply set up a Pentagon intelligence shop that produced the analysis they wanted.

Blaming Tenet is a high-risk strategy. Tenet has been loyal (perhaps too loyal) to the Bush administration, but newspaper leaks suggest there is already deep anger at the Agency over the way Bush officials pressured analysts in the run-up to war. And, if Tenet and other top CIA officials suspect they are being hung out to dry, they might open up about the most explosive question of all: How did the uranium hoax find its way into the president's State of the Union speech? According to Knight Ridder, some in the CIA believe top Bush officials knew the purchase was widely considered a fraud. (Powell was suspicious enough not to include it in his February 5 U.N. briefing.) But, they claim, Cheney and Rumsfeld pushed it anyway, eventually putting it into the mouth of the president.

That may not, in fact, be true. Or the truth may be too shrouded and muddled to capture the public's imagination. But, if the press keeps digging and Congress conducts a serious investigation, it's also possible the administration's prewar dishonesty will emerge as the dominant Washington story of the second half of 2003. Based on what we know so far, it richly deserves to be. **PETER BEINART**

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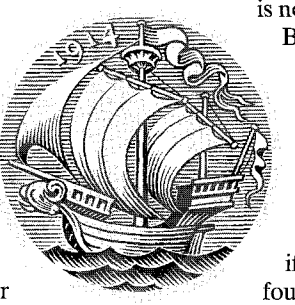
Reality Check

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL REPORT by Spencer Ackerman and John B. Judis leaves little doubt that the Bush administration systematically exaggerated the Iraqi threat (see "The First Casualty," page 14). Which raises an unavoidable question: Absent White House misinformation, was there a compelling case for war?

That question will remain even if the United States finds biological and chemical weapons in Iraq. The Bush administration never justified war solely on the basis of Saddam Hussein's unaccounted-for chemical and biological arms. After all, several dictatorships have such stockpiles (Syria has a huge one) and yet are not serious candidates for U.S. invasion. Instead, the administration lumped chemical and biological weapons together with nuclear ones as "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD), making the former appear more menacing through their association with the only weapons that would instantly change the balance of power in the Middle East. Then Iraq's WMD were linked to Al Qaeda in an effort to convince Americans that Baghdad might engineer another September 11.

This magazine's argument for war was different. It criticized the administration's unconvincing claims about Iraq's links to Al Qaeda and argued that, absent a clear terrorist link, it was Iraq's nuclear ambitions, not its biological and chemical stockpiles, that justified U.S. invasion. Those ambitions could perhaps have been restrained by the inspections regime that emerged late last year, but the magazine saw those inspections not as an alternative to the Bush administration's saber-rattling but as the result of it. Historical experience showed that once the United States rescinded its threat of war, Saddam would have ended the inspections and recreated the conditions that prevailed between 1998 and 2002, when he was free to pursue a nuclear capability with relative impunity. It was this pessimism about the world's—particularly Europe's—willingness to indefinitely contain Saddam that had led TNR to call for his overthrow in 1991, 1996, and 1998. And the behavior of France, Germany, and Russia in the run-up to war only confirmed that belief.

Saddam's history clearly suggested that, absent inspections, he would seek a nuclear bomb. The magazine cast doubt before the war on President Bush's claims that Iraq had sought enriched uranium from Africa and aluminum tubes designed for nuclear centrifuge, but it assumed the administration's lack of public evidence of Iraq's nuclear program was the result of America's general lack of intelligence on Iraq since 1998, when the inspectors were thrown out. And it was not assuaged by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) sanguine assessment of Iraq's nuclear program, given that defectors had contradicted the IAEA in the past. TNR believed, in other words, that once Saddam fell the U.S. would find evidence of a reconstituted nuclear program. The postwar claims of Iraqi scientists now suggest we may not. Why Saddam would have abandoned his nuclear program, and why, if he did, he would not have proved it by granting the IAEA full access to Iraqi nuclear scientists this spring, remains a mystery. And, yet, that program may indeed have been dormant. Which, in hindsight, undermines one of the magazine's central rationales for war.



But not the only rationale. In Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti, and (unsuccessfully) Rwanda, TNR supported military action in cases of moral emergency. Clearly, Saddam's ongoing crimes—which, we have argued in these pages, were worse than Slobodan Milosevic's—met that standard. Yes, the moral case for invasion would have been stronger in 1988, when Saddam was gassing the Kurds, or in 1991, when he was slaughtering the Shia. But it was compelling even at a time of "normal" oppression, particularly given that the alternative was endless sanctions, which, combined with Saddam's refusal to spend his oil revenue humanely, left hundreds of thousands of Iraqis dead.

And the case for ending Saddam's tyranny was not merely moral: It assumed that, as in the Balkans, democracy in the Arab world would follow U.S. power and that Arab democracy would provide the best long-term protection against terrorism. That argument is not undermined by the Bush administration's past dishonesty. It can be undermined only by its future lack of resolve. A decent Iraq with a liberalizing effect on its neighbors would, in the end, justify this war even if the United States never found an unconventional weapon. But supporters of the war have a special responsibility to ensure that the United States builds such a state—whatever the costs. This war, whose deceitful promotion has undermined democracy at home, can still bring democracy to the corner of the world that needs it most. We have not won, and we have not lost. The war for Iraq continues. ■

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NOTEBOOK

CHALABI RETURNS TO EXILE . . . DERRIDA DECONSTRUCTS HIMSELF

THE PRODIGAL EXILE

LAST WEEK, AHMED CHALABI LEFT Baghdad and headed to Washington. And who could blame him? After all, Washington has been friendlier turf for Chalabi, who had more success before the war convincing D.C. neocons that he was the man to lead a post–Saddam Hussein Iraq than he has had since then convincing Iraqi citizens of the same thing. But it turns out that Chalabi's poor performance on the ground in Baghdad has hurt his standing in Washington, too. On May 16, the Bush administration delayed plans to establish an Iraqi interim authority (which would have been made up primarily of the Iraqi-exile opposition) because it doubted Chalabi and his fellow exiles were up to the job of running the country. So, last week, Chalabi came to Washington to press his case that the United States needed to hand over more authority to the exiles. In a meeting with editors and reporters at *The Washington Post*, he tried out a novel argument. "From our point of view, we have done great things," Chalabi said of the exiles. "We helped persuade the U.S. to come to Iraq to throw out Saddam Hussein and open up the political process."

But why, exactly, is Chalabi's success in lobbying the United States an argument to give him more authority in Iraq, where to date he has failed to build much credibility with the populace? In fact, considering just how Chalabi and his allies persuaded the United States to go to war in Iraq—largely by hyping the threat posed by Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and downplaying the challenges the United States would face in rebuilding Iraq—it's actually an argument *against* granting Chalabi more power. Consider, for a moment, Chalabi and WMD. In the run-up to the war, *The New York Times*' Judith Miller painted a grave picture of Saddam's WMD capabilities—a picture that has, so far, not been borne out by any actual WMD discoveries in Iraq. And who supplied Miller the information to paint that picture? Chalabi. As Miller revealed in an internal e-mail to fellow *Times* reporter John Burns that was discovered by *The Washington Post*, Chalabi "provided most of the front page exclusives on WMD to our paper." The CIA has also faulted Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress for passing along bad intelligence on Saddam to the United States.

Ahmed Chalabi

And then there were Chalabi's predictions about what American forces would encounter when they arrived in Iraq. "The Iraqi people will welcome U.S. troops in Iraq," Chalabi reassured an ABC interviewer in February. "They will see them as liberators." As for how long American troops would have to stay to rebuild Iraq, Chalabi was sanguine. "[I]f the United States is committed to Saddam's overthrow and the establishment of an Iraqi democratic government, it can happen, and happen quickly," he told senators in June 2000.

Chalabi continued in the same vein last week: "There is no stigma attached in Iraq to being a friend of the United States," he insisted during a news conference at the Capitol. "There is no animosity of the Shia population to the United States for liberating Iraq. On the contrary, there is gratitude." Somehow, this line was more convincing before the massive anti-American demonstrations in the Shia holy cities of Najaf and Karbala; the repeated denunciations of the United States by Shia clerics; and the administration's own admission that, as one State Department official told the *Daily News*, "We totally underestimated the degree to which many Shiites oppose us." If Chalabi hopes to prove he's ready to have more power in Iraq, he'll have to do better than this.

PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES

FOR DECADES, JURGEN HABERMAS and Jacques Derrida have battled over the essence (if we can use such a logo-centric term) of our era: Does the moment demand a rationalist philosophy, as Habermas maintains, or should we accept deconstructionism, as Derrida insists? But we are pleased to report that Habermas and Derrida have finally found something to agree upon. Earlier this month, the philosophical eminences jointly issued a manifesto, simultaneously published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Liberation*. Humbly speaking on behalf of "German and French philosophers," they make a robust and lengthy case for a united Europe "to counterbalance the hegemonic unilateralism of the United States."

How were they able to look past their differences and achieve this long-awaited synthesis? By jettisoning most of their philosophical beliefs. Derrida, the great critic of enlightenment thinking, has gone Kantian. The document celebrates Europeans as a people with

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"a pronounced sense of the 'dialectic of the Enlightenment.'" He endorses such totalizing projects as "Europe," social democracy, and international law, even if they usurp individual and national difference—concessions that would have appalled the old Derrida. Habermas makes similar allowances. The essence of his political theory is a form of deliberative democracy, or the idea that rational debate will produce the optimal outcomes for society. But here he glides past obvious European divisions over economics and foreign policy to define European thinking as he would like to see it. "Europeans have a relatively great confidence in the organizational abilities and directive capabilities of the State," the manifesto declares, "while they are skeptical with regard to the efficiency of the market." (So why then did Margaret Thatcher and Silvio Berlusconi win elections?) And it seems to us a rather decisive rejection of his democratic theory that he now proposes a European security policy that limits "discourse": "In the framework of the future European constitution, there ought not to be and cannot be any separatism." For Habermas, it is easy to see how his anti-Americanism swallowed his doctrine. For Derrida, perhaps this is all some sort of post-structural joke. Or, maybe, it just proves that their theories were of limited practical value in the first place.

IMMACULATE IMPEACHMENT

IN THE JUNE 16 ISSUE OF *National Review*, Byron York heroically attempts to defend President Bush against the charge of being a liar. His most interesting argument is a rebuttal of the claim that Bush's lies, unlike Bill Clinton's, involve matters of great public importance rather than personal indiscretions. Not so, argues York, who insists that, "for all their alleged pettiness, Clinton's falsehoods led to disastrous consequences." Specifically, Clinton's lying about sex "mired his administration in a succession of legal and political quagmires. ... In the end, Clinton's lies led to impeachment and a ruined presidency." Hmm. As we recall it, the particular mechanisms that turned Clinton's private lies into public "quagmires" and ultimately led to impeachment were an overzealous independent counsel and the Republican Congress, both egged on by the conservative press. And, it's funny, but we always assumed that a "ruined" Clinton presidency was exactly what *National Review* had been aiming for.

THIS IS YOUR PAPER ON DRUGS

"HIGH COURT ALLOWS FORCED MEDICATION"—page A1 "teaser" headline, *USA Today*, June 17

"COURT LIMITS INVOLUNTARY DRUGGING OF DEFENDANTS"—page A4 headline of actual article ■

Inside the Box | Bruce Reed

FREE RIDE
United States pays hundreds of thousands of Iraqis not to show up for work. Bremer: "They're not ready for democracy, so we decided to start with socialism."

BREMER: KRT; SOSA: MARK GOLDMAN/ICON SMI

HIDE AND SEEK Hill calls off broad probe into Bush decisions on Iraq: "He destroyed the evidence before we got there!"

BALANCE OF TRADE—I
Tony Blair wants U.S.-style Supreme Court. Democrats' reaction: "How soon can they start?"

BALANCE OF TRADE—II
Europe prepares to live under Constitution. Bush: "That's another difference between us."

K STREET RATIONS
House tax bill denies child credit to 200,000 American troops in Iraq. DeLay: "We're already paying them to baby-sit."

POX AMERICANA U.S. Customs imposes embargo to stop rodents from crossing the border. INS response: "Rodents with existing visas can still go to flight school."

EXTREME SWELLING Republicans drop Medicare reform in rush to pass $400 billion prescription-drug bill. Common side effects may include bankruptcy.

TEXAS RANGERS
Sosa gets seven-game suspension for concealing cork in his bat. Bush: "Maybe I shouldn't have traded him after all."

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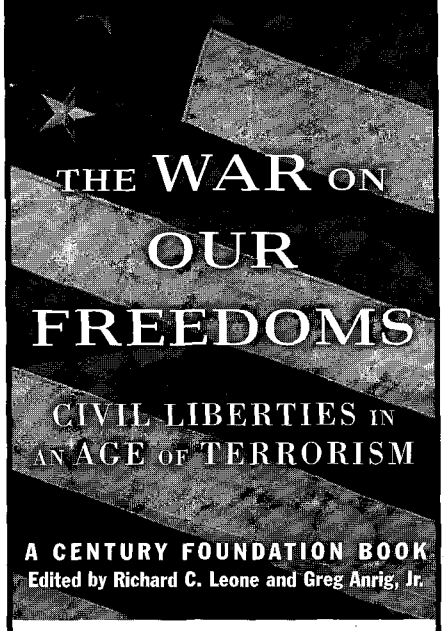

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Baghdad Dispatch

Flash Point

BY HASSAN FATTAH

THE ARTICLE COULD have been written off as an embarrassment for a new newspaper or yet another example of bad Arab journalism. Instead, a retracted news story about a military rape became a litmus test for the U.S. interim administration's attitude toward the nascent Iraqi press. On June 9, *Al Sa'ah* newspaper, one of the new Iraqi broadsheets, published a story alleging that American GIs had raped two teenage girls in the southern governorate of Wasit. According to *Al Sa'ah*, 18 soldiers raped the girls and left them for dead; one died and the other was killed by her family. The story was a fabrication. Ni'ma Abdul-Razzaq, *Al Sa'ah*'s senior editor, claims he didn't realize it until he scoured Wasit and determined the story was a lie.

The American occupation forces responded aggressively. The U.S. Central Command, which oversees Iraq, warned, "Coalition forces will take every step necessary to correct this report and ensure the Iraqi media becomes a credible source of information for the public." That evening, Abdul-Razzaq issued a retraction and fired the story's reporters. But, despite his actions—standard Western procedure for dealing with falsifying journalists—Iraq's administrator, L. Paul Bremer, quickly made clear just what those necessary steps would be, declaring a new order that placed restrictions on the media that "incite violence." In effect, Bremer imposed a code of conduct on the Iraqi press: He announced that the United States would ban publications that incite violence against the U.S. military, ethnic groups, or women and those that support the Baath Party. Reporters caught violating the decree can be fined, arrested, and detained.

Bremer's proclamation is part of a trend toward muzzling Iraq's nascent press freedom. To be sure, the Iraqi press is freer than under Saddam Hussein, but there are worrying signs in the relationship between American authorities and the media. Last month, Major General David Petraeus, commander of much of northern Iraq, seized control of Mosul's only TV station, citing the station's broadcast of a letter purportedly written by Saddam. "It's our responsibility to maintain the safe and secure environment," Petraeus told reporters. "That includes, if necessary, taking steps to avoid the transmission of segments such as that." According to *The Wall Street Journal*, an American officer was removed from duty when she argued against Petraeus's decision. The irony was not lost on Iraqis who listened to reports about Saddam's letters on the BBC.

Even the new U.S.-funded Iraqi Media Network (IMN) has not been immune to meddling. American advisers reportedly tried to prevent IMN reporters from airing Koranic recitations, a tradition in much of the Arab world, even though most of the reporters felt they would enhance the station's cultural legitimacy. Meanwhile, Bremer has the power to advise the IMN on any part of its broadcasts, including its editorial decisions. Worse, the United States brought in the wife of Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, who was close to former occupation head Jay Garner, to approve coverage. "It would have been like Ari Fleischer reviewing Dan Rather's scripts," notes Don North, the channel's Canadian-born adviser. Talabani's wife never showed up for work.

But the code of conduct announced after the *Al Sa'ah* imbroglio represents potentially the most sweeping oversight yet. Bremer's aides say the code is similar to press laws in most Western countries. But Bremer's new regulations define incitement much more broadly than Western press laws. They also make a small group of occupation officials judge and jury of what defines incitement and prescribe much more serious punishments, including jail terms, for offending journalists than do most Western press laws. Indeed, Bremer has announced the new prohibitions on "inciting violence," but few Iraqi journalists have actually seen them, which leaves him free to define them as broadly as he wishes and even to extend them to cover more general criticism of the occupation, says Haythem Manna, a member of both the Arab Commission on Human Rights and the London-based Arab Press Freedom Watch.

America's backsliding on promises of a free press—Bremer had told Iraqis he was "delighted to see the new newspapers in Iraq; some support us, some don't"—worries some Iraqi journalists, who fear the new code of conduct and other recent incidents could scare reporters back into their old practices of censoring themselves and toeing the party line. Instead of being taught a lesson in good and bad journalism, one Iraqi journalist says, his colleagues now feel cowed by the administration's heavy hand. As a result, *Al Sa'ah*'s shaken reporters may be very unwilling to take a critical line in the future. "The point [of the occupation] is to change not just Saddam but the school of Saddam," to change the methods he used to intimidate the press, Manna says. To the United States, those methods might seem enticing indeed. ■

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The ICC fights collateral damage.

Immunity Shot

BY JANINE ZACHARIA

LAST MONTH, IN an East Room speech after the Senate approved the second round of NATO expansion, a satisfied President Bush recalled that nearly two years earlier he had urged enlarging the alliance to include "all of Europe's democracies ... so that people in those countries would have the same chance for security and freedom enjoyed by Europe's older democracies." With seven Central and Eastern European nations now on track to join, the president turned his attention to the Balkans. Pledging to "help the people of the Balkans to become full partners in the progress of Europe," he said, "We welcome the commitment of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to the values and principles of NATO, and we will help them as they move forward with reform." It sounded great. But, while the president was holding out the possibility of NATO admission with one hand, his administration was taking it away with the other, threatening to withdraw the very assistance that Balkan countries would use to meet NATO standards.

The reason lies in a fight over what some might see as a legal abstraction: the Bush administration's insistence on exempting American citizens from prosecution by the new International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague. For months now, senior Bush officials have been fanning out across the globe to secure signatures on what are known as Article 98 agreements, named for a clause in the Rome Statute that established the ICC. The Bush administration claims that Article 98 allows for bilateral immunity agreements—derided by critics as "impunity" agreements—while the European Union, led by Germany and France, say the deals undermine the court and are contrary to the article's intent. But the White House insists that, with troops deployed around the world, the United States needs the protection. Efforts to indict Tommy Franks and Colin Powell in Belgium for their involvement in the Gulf wars have only heightened the sense that, as one official negotiating the agreements said, "our people are vulnerable to frivolous and unjust prosecutions." So the United States is pushing ahead in an effort to sign up 179 countries worldwide.

Failure to gain those signatures, however, could have consequences well beyond making sure Americans get fair trials. Thanks to the American Service-Members' Protection Act (ASPA), which Congress passed last August, a select group of countries that do not sign Article 98 agreements by July 1 could have new U.S. military aid eliminated. A State Department memo is circulating throughout the administration reminding officials of the deadline. The act exempts NATO members, Taiwan, and major non-NATO allies, including Argentina, Australia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, New Zealand, and South Korea. But, of the 58 countries affected—those ineligible for an exemption that have signed and ratified the ICC—43 still have not signed. And, although the administration might be flexible about the July 1 cutoff (the real deadline would be the 2004 appropriations bill in which aid would be provided or suspended), there's little sign that a vast array of Caribbean, Latin American, and African states are about to cave. That could undermine not only key U.S. relationships but the president's top foreign policy initiative: the war on terrorism.

TAKE AMERICA'S RELATIONSHIP with the "new Europe." In his May speech on NATO, Bush heaped praise on Central and Eastern European states for helping to combat terrorism and for providing troops and support in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But Bulgaria, one of seven nations soon to join NATO, now risks seeing its military aid cut because it won't sign an Article 98 agreement—a striking prospect for a country whose king-turned-prime-minister was just welcomed at the White House and lauded for his support of the Iraq war. Bulgaria is up for membership in the European Union, and the EU secretariat is warning aspiring members that their admission to the body could be in doubt if they bow to U.S. pressure. The country, according to Ambassador Elena Poptodorova, feels stuck. It's an ironic dilemma given what President Bush told a Polish audience on May 31: "You also struggled to become a full member of the Atlantic alliance, yet you have not come all this way—through occupations and tyranny and brave uprisings—only to be told that you must now choose between Europe and America." But that is exactly the choice Bush is presenting to Bulgaria.

Colombia, the third-largest recipient of U.S. military assistance after Israel and Egypt—it receives roughly $500 million annually—is perhaps the most prominent country that has pledged not to sign with the United States. Although much of that funding is exempt from the threatened cuts because of budgeting techniques, Colombia still stands to lose a lot of U.S. aid if it doesn't sign an Article 98 agreement—aid intended to help Colombia fight terrorism. This year, Washington budgeted $110 million specifically for protection of the Caño-Limón pipeline, which has been blown up by the National Liberation Army and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia guerrillas dozens of times annually. "If that aid is cut off, it would significantly affect the war against terrorism in Colombia," a diplomatic source said. Michael Shifter, vice president for policy at the Inter-American Dialogue, says cutting military aid to Colombia would undermine "the whole overall strategy of helping a country at a critical moment" in its war on drugs and terrorism. That would be a shocking move for an administration that has

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made the war on drugs a priority in no small part because of its presumed connection to the war on terrorism.

American officials acknowledge the potential consequences but still hope that Colombia will sign. Colombian diplomats and experts, however, anticipate that President Bush will invoke a national security waiver available to him in ASPA. "I just see them capitulating on this," said Adam Isacson, a senior associate at the Washington-based Center for International Policy's Colombia Project. But, when I asked about Colombia, the administration official involved in the negotiations told me, "No state can assume they are going to get a waiver. There's going to be a lot of states who think they're getting one and will not get one."

The Bush team says an Article 98 agreement with the United States is little to demand of nations that receive U.S. assistance. But others see one small issue potentially wreaking havoc on U.S. foreign policy. Heather Hamilton, coordinator of the Washington Working Group on the ICC, says, "The bottom line here is threatening our military assistance to deal with one very small part of our foreign policy—which in the larger scheme of things is not a very big threat. It's just stupid. ... It's holding small countries hostage to this issue when we have a great number of other things at stake." Bush administration officials acknowledge the point, but Douglas Feith, undersecretary of defense for policy, explained to me, "What we do in national security policymaking is typically deal with problems of trade-offs." There "have to be consequences" if countries are going to be persuaded to sign, Feith says. But, with ASPA threatening to cut off military aid to key U.S. allies, it is the United States that may feel the consequences most of all. ■

Tekoa Dispatch

Culture War

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

WHEN NIGHT DESCENDS on this hilltop settlement on the edge of the Judean Desert, the stillness is so complete that the loudest sounds seem to come from the chimes outside several houses. The isolation brings danger: Five Israelis have been murdered in terrorist ambushes nearby in the last two years, and some residents traveling the lonely roads at night wear helmets and bulletproof vests. And, now, Tekoa's remoteness could be its undoing. According to a recent report in *Ha'aretz*, Tekoa is one of 17 isolated settlements Ariel Sharon plans to uproot to accommodate an interim Palestinian state.

Residents dismiss the impending death sentence. The Palestinians, they say, will never stop terrorism, so security considerations will prevent Sharon from ceding the land. Besides, they add, rumors about Tekoa's demise have accompanied the settlement from its inception 25 years ago, and meanwhile it has grown from a handful of trailers into a thriving community of 250 families. "We've appeared on every list of settlements intended for removal," says Tekoa veteran Bobby Brown, whose response to the latest threat is to invest in long-delayed home repairs.

Still, bravado doesn't entirely conceal the anxiety. There are rumors among the settlers that government assessors have prepared plans for relocating Tekoa's 1,400 residents. Some residents concede that Sharon—who frequently visited Tekoa in its early years, delighting in its desert agriculture—is a foe they may be unable to defeat, even if the peace process stalls. They realize that the very fact that Sharon now sees some settlements as expendable has undermined their permanence in the minds of Israelis, no matter where the "road map" goes. Sharon has stunned settlers by committing himself not only to a Palestinian state but also to its "contiguity"—code for uprooting settlements. Sharon has even used the word "occupation" to justify the need for Israeli withdrawal from parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Polls show that close to 70 percent of the public supports Sharon's decision to withdraw from part of the territories, a level of support left-wing politicians, perceived as weaker on security, could never muster.

I ARRIVE AT the home of Sherri and Seth Mandell on the eve of what would have been the fifteenth birthday of their son, Koby, who was stoned to death by Palestinians two years ago in a desert cave below the settlement. The Mandells, who moved here from the United States in the late '90s, have created the Koby Mandell Foundation, which organizes summer camps for hundreds of children wounded in terrorist attacks and healing retreats for mothers who've lost children in attacks. "When I see the women on our retreats who don't benefit from a supportive community, I realize how lucky I am to live in Tekoa," says Sherri. "For a full year after Koby's death, the community took care of all our needs." Adds Seth, "To live in a community where Koby wasn't known would mean losing a living link with his memory."

Several houses down the boulder-lined path, Oren Kessler and Amiel Ungar are discussing Tekoa's future. Kessler, who owns Tekoa's mushroom farm, is secular, while Ungar, who teaches political science, is Orthodox. Tekoa's residents are almost evenly divided between secular and religious, creating a model of coexistence virtually unique among the smaller, pioneering settlements, which are almost all uniformly Orthodox. Ungar says that, if Tekoa is destroyed, "I'll go to the Interior Ministry and change my family name to 'Tekoa.' Then I'll move to a neighborhood on the border and spend the rest of my life ... dreaming of the 'Right of Return.'" "I didn't come to Tekoa for myself but for the Jewish people," says Kessler. "And, if the majority decides I should

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leave, I'll accept it—but on one condition: that this isn't seen by people in Tel Aviv as my personal tragedy but as the tragedy of the Jewish people. When Sharon talks about 'painful concessions,' I want to see the whole people participating in that pain."

But many in Tel Aviv do not share Kessler's pain. More than dismantling a few outposts, Sharon has dismantled the historic alliance between the religious right, represented by the settlement movement and motivated by Biblical entitlement, and the secular right, represented by the Likud and motivated by security concerns. It was thanks to that alliance, which Sharon helped create as Agriculture and then Defense Minister in the 1970s and 1980s, that the settlement project succeeded: The Orthodox settlers provided the manpower, while Likud governments provided the funding and infrastructure. Sharon transformed settler leaders from outsiders into the ultimate insiders, more comfortable in government offices than in outposts. Now, though, by distancing the security-minded secular right from the settlers, Sharon has in effect turned the settlers back into outsiders. Just how alone the religious right now finds itself was evident at a recent pro-settlers rally in Jerusalem's Zion Square, where nearly all of the thousands gathered wore the yarmulkes or long skirts of the Orthodox. During the Oslo years, Sharon himself led religious and secular demonstrators in united protests against concessions in that same Jerusalem square.

Some settlers have responded to Sharon's turn by lashing out at secular Israelis. A group of settler rabbis recently declared that, with Sharon's recognition of "the claim of ownership by foreigners over the land of Israel," secular Zionism "has ended its [historic] mission" and that from now on only religious Zionism could be trusted. And, at a recent meeting of the Likud central committee in Jerusalem, settlers were out in force to protest. When Sharon stood to speak, several hundred settlers and supporters hooted, blew whistles, and taunted him with chants of "Failure." Settlers held signs warning, SHARON WILL DIVIDE JERUSALEM, an ironic play on the Likud's old slogan against Labor. Pro-settler speakers attacked Sharon for betraying the Likud. "I grew up in this movement and fought in the [pre-state underground] Irgun," said one. "When I heard the prime minister use the word 'occupation,' I felt the ground shake." The angry and anguished speakers proved that some secular Likudniks are deeply ambivalent about Sharon's new direction. "We've gone from being a party that is right-wing politically and left-wing socially to being left-wing politically and right-wing socially," because of the Likud's recent pro-market reforms, bemoaned Guy Zachs, a central committee member.

Still, Sharon probably has the backing of a majority of secular Likud members. Average Likudniks remain wary of Arab intentions but recognize the demographic and political dilemmas posed by the occupation. One irate Knesset member told the pro-settler demonstrators, "Don't lecture me, I fought for the land of Israel my entire life." At a snack bar inside the hall, a half-dozen Likudniks shared Sharon's outlook. "Of course a Palestinian state isn't my dream," said Avi Mezik, a local council member from a town near Tel Aviv. "But, with the security situation and the economic crisis and American pressure, what choice do we have?" Roni Aharoni, a businessman, added, "Better to give them the whole territory rather than surrendering parts of the land in stages, the way Labor did." Only on security issues did the hard-line Likud instinct resurface. "Bush wants us to accept a cease-fire with Hamas?" asked Dubi, a businessman. "No problem. As long as he's willing to accept a cease-fire with Al Qaeda." The message for Sharon was clear: So long as you're strong against terrorism, the Likud's pragmatic majority will back you on territorial concessions.

For his part, Sharon ignored jeers from settler supporters and doggedly read from a prepared text that reaffirmed the need for "painful concessions." Not once did he glance up. Sharon wasn't addressing the rowdy central committee but the people of Israel, confident that the forces he'd built up were powerless to bring him down.

SHARON IS PROBABLY right. Settlers have been disappointed by the pragmatism of every Likud prime minister and have actually toppled two of them—Yitzhak Shamir in 1992 and Benjamin Netanyahu in 1999. But both those "victories" proved disastrous for the settlers: In place of Shamir came Yitzhak Rabin and Oslo, and in place of Netanyahu came Ehud Barak and Camp David. Now, the Yesha Council, the settlers' umbrella group, urges its sympathizers in government not to topple Sharon's coalition. Lacking even the threat of toppling Sharon, settlers are confined to pressure tactics. They've begun lobbying the 3,000 members of the Likud central committee. Yet, despite themselves, they still feel affection for Sharon, whom they call "Arik" with instinctive intimacy. "We need to keep reminding ourselves that he's not one of us anymore," says Yesha spokesman Yehoshua Mor-Yosef.

This betrayal by their patron is all the more painful because it happened after the settlers thought they'd won the battle for the Israeli public: They were proved right about the failure of the Oslo process. But they failed to convince the majority of Israelis of the wisdom of maintaining the settlements. Kessler blames the settlement movement for failing to attract more secular Jews to the territories. "We communicated contempt for secularists and leftists instead of reaching out to them," he says.

The residents of Tekoa and other settlements are hardly ready to give up. "If anything," says Ungar, "we were too accommodating. Now there has to be a struggle over Tekoa . . . to show that we didn't accept surrendering [our] land." Yet, even as they plan new West Bank outposts to replace uprooted ones—several new outposts were established last week—and campaign to convince Israelis of the danger of a Palestinian state, Yesha leaders know that the public has given Sharon a blank check on matters of territory and security. Concedes Mor-Yosef, "If we complain that Sharon has turned his back on us, people will say, 'He made you, he can break you.'" ■

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The selling of the Iraq war.

The First Casualty

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN AND JOHN B. JUDIS

The Bush administration's claims about Iraq's nuclear program and links to Al Qaeda were a synthesis of misinformation and exaggeration.

FOREIGN POLICY IS always difficult in a democracy. Democracy requires openness. Yet foreign policy requires a level of secrecy that frees it from oversight and exposes it to abuse. As a result, Republicans and Democrats have long held that the intelligence agencies—the most clandestine of foreign policy institutions—should be insulated from political interference in much the same way as the higher reaches of the judiciary. As the Tower Commission, established to investigate the Iran-Contra scandal, warned in November 1987, "The democratic processes ... are subverted when intelligence is manipulated to affect decisions by elected officials and the public."

If anything, this principle has grown even more important since September 11, 2001. The Iraq war presented the United States with a new defense paradigm: preemptive war, waged in response to a prediction of a forthcoming attack against the United States or its allies. This kind of security policy requires the public to base its support or opposition on expert intelligence to which it has no direct access. It is up to the president and his administration—with a deep interest in a given policy outcome—nonetheless to portray the intelligence community's findings honestly. If an administration represents the intelligence unfairly, it effectively forecloses an informed choice about the most important question a nation faces: whether or not to go to war. That is exactly what the Bush administration did when it sought to convince the public and Congress that the United States should go to war with Iraq.

From late August 2002 to mid-March of this year, the Bush administration made its case for war by focusing on the threat posed to the United States by Saddam Hussein's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and by his purported links to the Al Qaeda terrorist network. Officials conjured up images of Iraqi mushroom clouds over U.S. cities and of Saddam transferring to Osama bin Laden chemical and biological weapons that could be used to create new and more lethal September elevenths. In Nashville on August 26, 2002, Vice President Dick Cheney warned of a Saddam "armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror" who could "directly threaten America's friends throughout the region and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail." In Washington on September 26, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld claimed he had "bulletproof" evidence of ties between Saddam and Al Qaeda. And, in Cincinnati on October 7, President George W. Bush warned, "The Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and gases and atomic weapons." Citing Saddam's association with Al Qaeda, the president added that this "alliance with terrorists could allow the Iraqi regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints."

Yet there was no consensus within the American intelligence community that Saddam represented such a grave and imminent threat. Rather, interviews with current and former intelligence officials and other experts reveal that the Bush administration culled from U.S. intelligence those assessments that supported its position and omitted those that did not. The administration ignored, and even suppressed, disagreement within the intelligence agencies and pressured the CIA to reaffirm its preferred version of the Iraqi threat. Similarly, it stonewalled, and sought to discredit, international weapons inspectors when their findings

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threatened to undermine the case for war.

Three months after the invasion, the United States may yet discover the chemical and biological weapons that various governments and the United Nations have long believed Iraq possessed. But it is unlikely to find, as the Bush administration had repeatedly predicted, a reconstituted nuclear weapons program or evidence of joint exercises with Al Qaeda—the two most compelling security arguments for war. Whatever is found, what matters as far as American democracy is concerned is whether the administration gave Americans an honest and accurate account of what it knew. The evidence to date is that it did not, and the cost to U.S. democracy could be felt for years to come.

The Battle Over Intelligence
Fall 2001–Fall 2002

The Bush administration decided to go to war with Iraq in the late fall of 2001. At Camp David on the weekend after the September 11 attacks, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz floated the idea that Iraq, with more than 20 years of inclusion on the State Department's terror-sponsor list, be held immediately accountable. In his memoir, speechwriter David Frum recounts that, in December, after the Afghanistan campaign against bin Laden and his Taliban sponsors, he was told to come up with a justification for war with Iraq to include in Bush's State of the Union address in January 2002. But, in selling the war to the American public during the next year, the Bush administration faced significant obstacles.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, many Americans had automatically associated Saddam's regime with Al Qaeda and enthusiastically backed an invasion. But, as the immediate horror of September 11 faded and the war in Afghanistan concluded successfully (and the economy turned downward), American enthusiasm diminished. By mid-August 2002, a Gallup poll showed support for war with Saddam at a post–September 11 low, with 53 percent in favor and 41 percent opposed—down from 61 percent to 31 percent just two months before. Elite opinion was also turning against war, not only among liberal Democrats but among former Republican officials, such as Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger. In Congress, even conservative Republicans such as Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and House Majority Leader Dick Armey began to express doubts that war was justified. Armey declared on August 8, 2002, "If we try to act against Saddam Hussein, as obnoxious as he is, without proper provocation, we will not have the support of other nation-states who might do so."

Unbeknownst to the public, the administration faced equally serious opposition within its own intelligence agencies. At the CIA, many analysts and officials were skeptical that Iraq posed an imminent threat. In particular, they rejected a connection between Saddam and Al Qaeda. According to a *New York Times* report in February 2002, the CIA found "no evidence that Iraq has engaged in terrorist operations against the United States in nearly a decade, and the agency is also convinced that President Saddam Hussein has not provided chemical or biological weapons to Al Qaeda or related terrorist groups."

CIA analysts also generally endorsed the findings of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which concluded that, while serious questions remained about Iraq's nuclear program—many having to do with discrepancies in documentation—its present capabilities were virtually nil. The IAEA possessed no evidence that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear program and, it seems, neither did U.S. intelligence. In CIA Director George Tenet's January 2002 review of global weapons-technology proliferation, he did not even mention a nuclear threat from Iraq, though he did warn of one from North Korea. The review said only, "We believe that Iraq has probably continued at least low-level theoretical R&D [research and development] associated with its nuclear program." This vague determination didn't reflect any new evidence but merely the intelligence community's assumption that the Iraqi dictator remained interested in building nuclear weapons. Greg Thielmann, the former director for strategic proliferation and military affairs at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), tells The New Republic, "During the time that I was office director, 2000 to 2002, we never assessed that there was good evidence that Iraq was reconstituting or getting really serious about its nuclear weapons program."

The CIA and other intelligence agencies believed Iraq still possessed substantial stocks of chemical and biological weapons, but they were divided about whether Iraq was rebuilding its facilities and producing new weapons. The intelligence community's uncertainty was articulated in a classified report from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in September 2002. "A substantial amount of Iraq's chemical warfare agents, precursors, munitions, and production equipment were destroyed between 1991 and 1998 as a result of Operation Desert Storm and UNSCOM [United Nations Special Commission] actions," the agency reported. "There is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has—or will—establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities."

Had the administration accurately depicted the consensus within the intelligence community in 2002—that Iraq's ties with Al Qaeda were inconsequential; that its nuclear weapons program was minimal at best; and that its chemical and biological weapons programs, which had yielded significant stocks of dangerous weapons in the past, may or may not have been ongoing—it would have had a very difficult time convincing Congress and the American public to support a war to disarm Saddam. But the Bush administration painted a very different, and far more frightening, picture. Representative Rush Holt, a New Jersey Democrat who ultimately voted against the war, says of his discussions with constituents, "When someone spoke of the need to invade,

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[they] invariably brought up the example of what would happen if one of our cities was struck. They clearly were convinced by the administration that Saddam Hussein—either directly or through terrorist connections—could unleash massive destruction on an American city. And I presume that most of my colleagues heard the same thing back in their districts." One way the administration convinced the public was by badgering CIA Director Tenet into endorsing key elements of its case for war even when it required ignoring the classified findings of his and other intelligence agencies.

AS A RESULT of its failure to anticipate the September 11 attacks, the CIA, and Tenet in particular, were under almost continual attack in the fall of 2001. Congressional leaders, including Richard Shelby, the ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, wanted Tenet to resign. But Bush kept Tenet in his job, and, within the administration, Tenet and the CIA came under an entirely different kind of pressure: Iraq hawks in the Pentagon and in the vice president's office, reinforced by members of the Pentagon's semi-official Defense Policy Board, mounted a year-long attempt to pressure the CIA to take a harder line against Iraq—whether on its ties with Al Qaeda or on the status of its nuclear program.

A particular bone of contention was the CIA's analysis of the ties between Saddam and Al Qaeda. In the immediate aftermath of September 11, former CIA Director James Woolsey, a member of the Defense Policy Board who backed an invasion of Iraq, put forth the theory—in this magazine and elsewhere—that Saddam was connected to the World Trade Center attacks. In September 2001, the Bush administration flew Woolsey to London to gather evidence to back up his theory, which had the support of Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, then the Defense Policy Board chairman. While Wolfowitz and Perle had their own long-standing and complex reasons for wanting to go to war with Iraq, they and other administration officials believed that, if they could tie Saddam to Al Qaeda, they could justify the war to the American people. As a veteran aide to the Senate Intelligence Committee observes, "They knew that, if they could really show a link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda, then their objective, ... which was go in and get rid of Hussein, would have been a foregone conclusion."

But this theory immediately encountered resistance from the CIA and other intelligence agencies. Woolsey's main piece of evidence for a link between Saddam and Al Qaeda was a meeting that was supposed to have taken place in Prague in April 2001 between lead September 11 hijacker Mohamed Atta and an Iraqi intelligence official. But none of the intelligence agencies could place Atta in Prague on that date. (Indeed, receipts and other travel documents placed him in the United States.) An investigation by Czech officials dismissed the claim, which was based on a single unreliable witness. The CIA was also receiving other information that rebutted a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. After top Al Qaeda leader Abu Zubaydah was captured in March 2002, he was debriefed by the CIA, and the results were widely circulated in the intelligence community. As *The New York Times* reported, Zubaydah told his captors that bin Laden himself rejected any alliance with Saddam. "I remember reading the Abu Zubaydah debriefing last year, while the administration was talking about all of these other reports [of a Saddam–Al Qaeda link], and thinking that they were only putting out what they wanted," a CIA official told the paper. Zubaydah's story, which intelligence analysts generally consider credible, has since been corroborated by additional high-ranking Al Qaeda terrorists now in U.S. custody, including Ramzi bin Al Shibh and September 11 architect Khalid Shaikh Mohammed.

Facing resistance from the CIA, administration officials began a campaign to pressure the agency to toe the line. Perle and other members of the Defense Policy Board, who acted as quasi-independent surrogates for Wolfowitz, Cheney, and other administration advocates for war in Iraq, harshly criticized the CIA in the press. The CIA's analysis of Iraq, Perle said, "isn't worth the paper it is written on." In the summer of 2002, Vice President Cheney made several visits to the CIA's Langley headquarters, which were understood within the agency as an attempt to pressure the low-level specialists interpreting the raw intelligence. "That would freak people out," says one former CIA official. "It is supposed to be an ivory tower. And that kind of pressure would be enormous on these young guys."

But the Pentagon found an even more effective way to pressure the agency. In October 2001, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith set up a special intelligence operation in the Pentagon to "think through how the various terrorist organizations relate to each other and ... state sponsors," in Feith's description. Their approach echoed the "Team B" strategy that conservatives had used in the past: establishing a separate entity to offer alternative intelligence analyses to the CIA. Conservatives had done this in 1976, criticizing and intimidating the agency over its estimates of Soviet military strength, and again in 1998, arguing for the necessity of missile defense. (Wolfowitz had participated in both projects; the latter was run by Rumsfeld.) This time, the new entity—headed by Perle protégé Abram Shulsky—reassessed intelligence already collected by the CIA along with information from Iraqi defectors and, as Feith remarked coyly at a press conference earlier this month, "came up with some interesting observations about the linkages between Iraq and Al Qaeda." In August 2002, Feith brought the unit to Langley to brief the CIA about its findings. If the separate intelligence unit wasn't enough to challenge the CIA, Rumsfeld also began publicly discussing the creation of a new Pentagon position, an undersecretary for intelligence, who would rival the CIA director and diminish the authority of the agency.

In its classified reports, the CIA didn't diverge from its

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initial skepticism about the ties between Al Qaeda and Saddam. But, under pressure from his critics, Tenet began to make subtle concessions. In March 2002, Tenet told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Iraqi regime "had contacts with Al Qaeda" but declined to elaborate. He would make similar ambiguous statements during the congressional debate over war with Iraq.

THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY was also pressured to exaggerate Iraq's nuclear program. As Tenet's early 2002 threat assessments had indicated, U.S. intelligence showed precious little evidence to indicate a resumption of Iraq's nuclear program. And, while the absence of U.N. inspections had introduced greater uncertainty into intelligence collection on Iraq, according to one analyst, "We still knew enough, [and] we could watch pretty closely what was happening."

These judgments were tested in the spring of 2002, when intelligence reports began to indicate that Iraq was trying to procure a kind of high-strength aluminum tube. Some analysts from the CIA and DIA quickly came to the conclusion that the tubes were intended to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon through the kind of gas-centrifuge project Iraq had built before the first Gulf war. This interpretation seemed plausible enough at first, but over time analysts at the State Department's INR and the Department of Energy (DOE) grew troubled. The tubes' thick walls and particular diameter made them a poor fit for uranium enrichment, even after modification. That determination, according to the INR's Thielmann, came from weeks of interviews with "the nation's experts on the subject, ... they're the ones that have the labs, like Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where people really know the science and technology of enriching uranium." Such careful study led the INR and the DOE to an alternative analysis: that the specifications of the tubes made them far better suited for artillery rockets. British intelligence experts studying the issue concurred, as did some CIA analysts.

But top officials at the CIA and DIA did not. As the weeks dragged on, more and more high-level intelligence officials attended increasingly heated interagency bull sessions. And the CIA-DIA position became further and further entrenched. "They clung so tenaciously to this point of view about it being a nuclear weapons program when the evidence just became clearer and clearer over time that it wasn't the case," recalls a participant. David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security, who had been asked to provide the administration with information on past Iraqi procurements, noticed an anomaly in how the intelligence community was handling the issue. "I was told that this dispute had not been mediated by a competent, impartial technical committee, as it should have been according to accepted practice," he wrote on his organization's website this March. By September 2002, when the intelligence agencies were preparing a joint National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, top CIA officials insisted their opinion prevail. Says Thielmann, "Because the CIA is also the head of the entire U.S. intelligence community, it becomes very hard not to have the ultimate judgment being the CIA's judgment, rather than who in the intelligence community is most expert on the issue."

By the fall of 2002, when public debate over the war really began, the administration had created consternation in the intelligence agencies. The press was filled for the next two months with quotes from CIA officials and analysts complaining of pressure from the administration to toe the line on Iraq. Says one former staff member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, "People [kept] telling you first that things weren't right, weird things going on, different people saying, 'There's so much pressure, you know, they keep telling us, go back and find the right answer,' things like that." For the most part, this pressure was not reflected in the CIA's classified reports, but it would become increasingly evident in the agency's declassified statements and in public statements by Tenet. The administration hadn't won an outright endorsement of its analysis of the Iraqi threat, but it had undermined and intimidated its potential critics in the intelligence community.

THE BATTLE IN CONGRESS

Fall 2002

THE ADMINISTRATION USED the anniversary of September 11, 2001, to launch its public campaign for a congressional resolution endorsing war, with or without U.N. support, against Saddam. The opening salvo came on the Sunday before the anniversary in the form of a leak to Judith Miller and Michael R. Gordon of *The New York Times* regarding the aluminum tubes. Miller and Gordon reported that, according to administration officials, Iraq had been trying to buy tubes specifically designed as "components of centrifuges to enrich uranium" for nuclear weapons. That same day, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice appeared on the political talk shows to trumpet the discovery of the tubes and the Iraqi nuclear threat. Explained Rice, "There will always be some uncertainty about how quickly [Saddam] can acquire nuclear weapons. But we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." Rumsfeld added, "Imagine a September eleventh with weapons of mass destruction. It's not three thousand—it's tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children."

Many of the intelligence analysts who had participated in the aluminum-tubes debate were appalled. One described the feeling to TNR: "You had senior American officials like Condoleezza Rice saying the only use of this aluminum really is uranium centrifuges. She said that on television. And that's just a lie." Albright, of the Institute for Science and International Security, recalled, "I became dismayed when a knowledgeable government scientist told

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me that the administration could say anything it wanted about the tubes while government scientists who disagreed were expected to remain quiet." As Thielmann puts it, "There was a lot of evidence about the Iraqi chemical and biological weapons programs to be concerned about. Why couldn't we just be honest about that without hyping the nuclear account? Making the case for active pursuit of nuclear weapons makes it look like the administration was trying to scare the American people about how dangerous Iraq was and how it posed an imminent security threat to the United States."

In speeches and interviews, administration officials also warned of the connection between Saddam and Al Qaeda. On September 25, 2002, Rice insisted, "There clearly are contacts between Al Qaeda and Iraq. ... There clearly is testimony that some of the contacts have been important contacts and that there's a relationship there." On the same day, President Bush warned of the danger that "Al Qaeda becomes an extension of Saddam's madness." Rice, like Rumsfeld—who the next day would call evidence of a Saddam–bin Laden link "bulletproof"—said she could not share the administration's evidence with the public without endangering intelligence sources. But Bob Graham, the Florida Democrat who chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee, disagreed. On September 27, Paul Anderson, a spokesman for Graham, told *USA Today* that the senator had seen nothing in the CIA's classified reports that established a link between Saddam and Al Qaeda.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, in fact, was the greatest congressional obstacle to the administration's push for war. Under the lead of Graham and Illinois Senator Richard Durbin, the committee enjoyed respect and deference in the Senate and the House, and its members could speak authoritatively, based on their access to classified information, about whether Iraq was developing nuclear weapons or had ties to Al Qaeda. And, in this case, the classified information available to the committee did not support the public pronouncements being made by the CIA.

In the late summer of 2002, Graham had requested from Tenet an analysis of the Iraqi threat. According to knowledgeable sources, he received a 25-page classified response reflecting the balanced view that had prevailed earlier among the intelligence agencies—noting, for example, that evidence of an Iraqi nuclear program or a link to Al Qaeda was inconclusive. Early that September, the committee also received the DIA's classified analysis, which reflected the same cautious assessments. But committee members became worried when, midway through the month, they received a new CIA analysis of the threat that highlighted the Bush administration's claims and consigned skepticism to footnotes. According to one congressional staffer who read the document, it highlighted "extensive Iraqi chem-bio programs and nuclear programs and links to terrorism" but then included a footnote that read, "This information comes from a source known to fabricate in the past." The staffer concluded that "they didn't do analysis. What they did was they just amassed everything they could that said anything bad about Iraq and put it into a document."

Graham and Durbin had been demanding for more than a month that the CIA produce an NIE on the Iraqi threat—a summary of the available intelligence, reflecting the judgment of the entire intelligence community—and toward the end of September, it was delivered. Like Tenet's earlier letter, the classified NIE was balanced in its assessments. Graham called on Tenet to produce a declassified version of the report that could guide members in voting on the resolution. Graham and Durbin both hoped the declassified report would rebut the kinds of overheated claims they were hearing from administration spokespeople. As Durbin tells TNR, "The most frustrating thing I find is when you have credible evidence on the intelligence committee that is directly contradictory to statements made by the administration."

On October 1, 2002, Tenet produced a declassified NIE. But Graham and Durbin were outraged to find that it omitted the qualifications and countervailing evidence that had characterized the classified version and played up the claims that strengthened the administration's case for war. For instance, the intelligence report cited the much-disputed aluminum tubes as evidence that Saddam "remains intent on acquiring" nuclear weapons. And it claimed, "All intelligence experts agree that Iraq is seeking nuclear weapons and that these tubes could be used in a centrifuge enrichment program"—a blatant mischaracterization. Subsequently, the NIE allowed that "some" experts might disagree but insisted that "most" did not, never mentioning that the DOE's expert analysts had determined the tubes were not suitable for a nuclear weapons program. The NIE also said that Iraq had "begun renewed production of chemical warfare agents"—which the DIA report had left pointedly in doubt. Graham demanded that the CIA declassify dissenting portions.

In response, Tenet produced a single-page letter. It satisfied one of Graham's requests: It included a statement that there was a "low" likelihood of Iraq launching an unprovoked attack on the United States. But it also contained a sop to the administration, stating without qualification that the CIA had "solid reporting of senior-level contacts between Iraq and al-Qaeda going back a decade." Graham demanded that Tenet declassify more of the report, and Tenet promised to fax over additional material. But, later that evening, Graham received a call from the CIA, informing him that the White House had ordered Tenet not to release anything more.

That same evening, October 7, 2002, Bush gave a major speech in Cincinnati defending the resolution now before Congress and laying out the case for war. Bush's speech brought together all the misinformation and exaggeration that the White House had been disseminating that fall.

continued on page 23

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ENERGY SECURITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Senate debates a sweeping energy bill. Which energy sources will meet our needs while protecting our environment?

The *New Republic* on June 3, 2003, convened a symposium at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C., to debate the best strategy for keeping the environment clean while ensuring that the country has reliable sources of power. As the Senate debates a national energy strategy, there are concerns about whether the country will have adequate supplies of energy that meet rigorous environmental standards. The panelists discussed the qualities of the Senate legislation as well as its shortcomings. They also considered the benefits and drawbacks of a variety of energy sources.

THE PANEL

KAREN KNUTSON
Vice President, Government Relations, ML Strategies, and Former Deputy Assistant to Vice President Cheney for Domestic Policy

WILFRID KOHL
Director, International Energy and Environment Program of the Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute

PAUL PORTNEY
President, Resources for the Future

JEFFREY BENJAMIN
Vice President Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Exelon Corporation

MODERATED BY

GREGG EASTERBROOK
The New Republic Senior Editor

MODERATOR: I think our first topic would wisely be the energy bill.

The House authorizes oil drilling in [the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge while] the Senate version does not. I think that's the main policy difference. I would like to first ask: assuming the energy bill passes in something similar to its form in the Senate, is this enough? Does this solve our energy policy questions of the moment, or is this just a stepping stone to some future bill that we will need?

KAREN KNUTSON: I worked on the Hill for 12 years before I went down to the White House and enjoyed my time there. And the first thing we started to do was to work on the energy plan. The president called us down and had us start basically the second day after [he] took office, and we drafted an energy plan, and it had 105 recommendations.

Of those 105 recommendations, 20 of them required legislation. So this answers your question in some way. We [thought] that those 20 things—and all of them are contained in some form or other in either the House or Senate bill—are very critical components of the energy plan. They're very important to the future of energy policy and where we're headed.

Is the energy bill going to solve the country's energy problems, all of them? You can't ever say that.

JEFFREY BENJAMIN: I'll comment on a narrower slice of it. We feel this proposed legislation provides the recognition for nuclear [power] that we believe is important and appropriate. A lot of people in the 1990s [thought] that nuclear energy was on its way out. There was a lot of discussion about shutting down plants, there was a lot of discussion about the performance of the industry as a whole, and some people were starting to predict the death knell of the industry.

We as an industry have learned how to manage and operate these plants safely and more efficiently than ever. And we think that what's reflected now in this energy legislation is an appropriate recognition that there is a role for nuclear [power] going forward in a diverse energy mix.

PAUL PORTNEY: The one thing I would say, where I'm a little disappointed in the debate, is that I think it's silent on two awfully important aspects.

The first is climate change, which I take to be a problem to which we have to pay more serious attention. And [the second] has to do with automotive fuel economy, which accounts for 40 percent of the oil that the United States uses; one out of every 10 barrels used in the world today goes into cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUVs in the United States. And I'm afraid that both the [House and Senate bills] are not going to make very much progress on this.

With respect to fuel economy, there will be some incentives in [the legislation] for hydrogen research. I think that needs to be a part of anything that we do on fuel economy, but I don't think that it's going to make a big difference, and it's not going to make any difference at all for the next 10 to 15 years.

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WILFRID KOHL: I, too, am heartened that there are some incentives in [the legislation] for nuclear power. I'm moderately pro-nuclear power and believe that it can continue to make an important contribution and is basically an emission-free energy source.

I think the major challenge facing nuclear power as we go forward really is economics. And that is that new nuclear plants, if we are to have them—and we haven't ordered a new one for some time in this country—have got to compete with coal plants or even natural gas turbines.

And the challenge is going to be to develop new technology that is lower in capital costs and [that] can compete in that marketplace that is now a more deregulated electric industry.

On the energy bill, there is a question, I guess, still somewhat open [as to] whether there's going to be an electricity title in the bill setting more of a clear federal role. As you go forward in electric deregulation, it's very complicated, it's hard to get members of Congress up to speed on even understanding it; I have trouble getting my students to understand it. But the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has put out a new proposal for a standard market design. They would like to see more regional power pools and entities around the country. We will have to wait and see, I guess, whether there is going to be a consensus developed on an electricity title.

MODERATOR: Let's talk about [natural] gas for a minute. Then we'll talk about the greenhouse effect. Then we'll go to the audience. Should we worry about gas? It seems plentiful now. It's invisible—you can't even see it—so it seems like it just appears magically in your home. Should we be concerned about gas prices or supplies?

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, the average consumer should worry about it. . . . Some of the wild swings in prices that consumers have seen in some of the [so-called] deregulated markets have been driven by the gas prices.

This has demonstrated to us, in no uncertain terms, the economic benefits of nuclear [power]. Our nuclear production costs are the best production costs within the stack [of various energy supplies], and one of the drivers for our consideration going forward, quite frankly, is what happens to the gas prices going forward and what's going to happen as a result in the electricity price markets.

MODERATOR: Do you think spikes in natural gas [prices will] cause utility companies to want new nuclear power plants again?

MR. BENJAMIN: Our production prices are . . . very stable. The fuel price portion of that is about one-fourth of our total production cost, and over the past 10 years, that's actually declined.

Conversely, you look at a gas plant. A gas plant [that] runs with a few people [is] relatively cheap to build. However, the price that comes out of the breakers [is] driven very dominantly by the price of the fuel. Coal plants, which [comprise] about 50 percent of our generation mix,

Paul Portney:
"CLIMATE CHANGE [IS] A PROBLEM TO WHICH WE HAVE TO PAY MORE SERIOUS ATTENTION."

are moderately expensive to build.

So as we see instability in the gas price markets, that will, I think, eventually drive [policymakers to take] another look at increased base-load generation. And our view is that we want to strike the appropriate balance and strongly consider emission-free generation sources. So, that equation will get us down to having nuclear [power] be a strong part of that mix going forward.

MODERATOR: Do you think, Jeff, that anything would happen that would change the views of consumers? It's obvious that the public is still very hesitant about nuclear power, and people are much more likely to say, "Well, gee, just use this natural gas stuff; it's invisible, it has a low greenhouse effect, use that." Will public resistance change?

MR. BENJAMIN: I think we have learned a lot over the past several decades, and part of that includes getting out and being willing and able to interact with the public: the public around our plants and the general public as a whole. We have a good story to tell. We need to be better at getting out and communicating what we're doing.

MODERATOR: Polls show that public resistance to nuclear power is moderately declining, although it's still obviously a factor. I tended to view last year's congressional vote on the Yucca Mountain facility as a barometer of public opinion, too. Congress finally authorized Yucca Mountain, not with tremendous enthusiasm, but [members] were willing to commit themselves to a mildly pro-nuclear vote. And no one was hounded out of office in the 2002 elections as a result of that.

So my guess would be that members of the House and Senate voted the way they did because they felt their constituents were beginning to relax a little bit on this topic area. So this may reflect larger congressional votes to come in the future.

MR. PORTNEY: I think if nuclear [power] can solve the cost [issue], continue to have a good operating and safety record, make progress on the waste issue, and reassure people that if we rely on nuclear power more, we won't add to a serious [worldwide] proliferation concern, then nuclear power has the potential to take pressure off of natural gas.

If we're not using natural gas exclusively for new electricity generation, then there is more available for home heating, which is where a lot of natural gas gets used. And there's more natural gas available for industry. Industry has become a big source of concern about gas because it's the preferred feed stock for chemical production. And now [industry is] competing not only against homeowners but also against electricity generators for natural gas.

MR. BENJAMIN: The capital investment required and the confidence in the financial markets is an important issue to us. But what underpins [them] is having certainty in the regulatory process . . . and being able to predict and speak with confidence what your endpoint will be for completion of such a project.

MODERATOR: Obviously, global warming is the 900-pound gorilla of this subject. If it were just a matter of getting enough tankers from the Middle East and finding places to

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park all of our SUVs, energy policy could muddle forward, but the science of global warming is getting stronger every year. It seems more and more likely that the Western nations—and eventually the entire world—will have to do something. Should we be planning already for carbon trading or whatever will come along? Should [the greenhouse effect] already be part of our energy policy?

MS. KNUTSON: The president put forth his plan on how to attack all global greenhouse issues, and his plan in a nutshell would reduce the amount of emissions over the coming years by a certain percentage. He felt that this was a stronger, more effective way to reduce the amount of emissions than was discussed in the Kyoto Protocol, which was soundly defeated by the Senate.

MR. PORTNEY: I think the president was exactly right to disassociate the United States from Kyoto, which I think would have required an unrealistically large reduction in an unrealistically short period of time. So I'm halfway with them there.

I depart, though, with respect to the alternative that the president put forward, which, I think, Karen, is not necessarily to reduce emissions but [to reduce] the rate of growth of the emissions' intensity. Even under the president's plan, emissions [are] going up, and I think we need to move in the opposite direction, although much, much more gradually than Kyoto would have done.

MODERATOR: Well, one of the ideas out there is from Paul's own organization. Resources for the Future designed the acid rain training program that's been so spectacularly successful both in environmental impact and cost terms in the last 10 years. They have now designed a carbon-trading program that is similar in principle, and [as] best as I can tell, [is] ready to go.

MR. PORTNEY: Well, it would be a marketable permit approach to this problem. Permits could be allocated in a number of ways. My colleagues have suggested that the permits would be auctioned off, and then the revenues [would be used] to address the adverse effects of higher energy prices. But it's a program that would begin very, very gradually rather than requiring emission reductions below 1990 levels, as Kyoto would have done.

(The moderator turns to the audience for questions.)

AUDIENCE: It seems that we're chasing our tails with regard to oil policy if our goal is to end our dependence on foreign sources. It makes lots of environmental sense but little economic sense.

MR. PORTNEY: In my lifetime, the United States is never going to be completely independent of foreign suppliers of petroleum; it's just not going to happen. And any energy bill that's premised on this you should view unbelievably skeptically.

Furthermore, as Will said, even if we found a new source of oil in the United States that enabled us [to] no longer import, any time the price goes up because of a supply disruption somewhere else in the world, we're going to pay higher prices. Somebody who has all the oil in the United States is not going to sell it to U.S. sources [for] less than they could sell it to someone in some other part of the world, and we've seen [that] this oil can be shipped all around the world.

Karen Knutson:
"WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO MAKE HYDROGEN A LOT MORE AFFORDABLE."

So even if we were independent, we would still be vulnerable to price shocks that would occur if there was some kind of conflagration in the Persian Gulf. People really need to keep it in mind because there's this notion [that] if only we could discover enough here or use less here, we wouldn't be vulnerable to higher prices. It's just wrong; we would be.

MODERATOR: Paul, just a few weeks ago Senator Joe Lieberman, running for president, introduced his energy campaign policy at Resources for the Future, and the key plank of that policy was [that] in 20 years he would eliminate oil imports from the Persian Gulf. Did you feel unbelievably skeptical when he said that?

MR. PORTNEY: Unbelievably so. Yes.

MR. BENJAMIN: Was nuclear [power] part of his mix?

MODERATOR: Actually, no. Senator Lieberman's energy policy sat totally silent on nuclear [power] as if it didn't exist.

MR. KOHL: I agree very much with what Paul said here on oil imports. We get a little bit paranoid around this town [by] focusing on oil imports as some kind of magical factor in the equation, and what we really should focus on, if you're concerned about oil security, is the total amount of our oil consumption. That has major economic effects when the price goes up, as it does more than occasionally because of political interruptions or interruptions somewhere around the world.

So in that sense, what we have to try to do is to reduce our oil consumption. It's a tough issue because as you know, most of our oil is used in the transportation sector, and we don't immediately have alternatives.

AUDIENCE: Looking at getting [further] into nuclear power and generating electricity for future uses, how are you going to extract those resources, and how are we going to do that to keep it environmentally sound?

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, first of all, as I mentioned earlier, uranium prices have fallen over the past decade, and that's due in large part [to the fact] that uranium is an abundant resource. A number of nations that are very friendly to us have very abundant, slightly more enriched uranium deposits. And so that is something that we're confident will remain in place for a number of years to come.

MODERATOR: Let's turn the discussion to hydrogen. Obviously, hydrogen is a possible future energy source or—actually, it's not an energy source—an energy medium because we have to use some form of energy to generate hydrogen by all known processes. Am I going to drive a hydrogen car? Is anybody here in this [room] going to drive a hydrogen car? How far away are we talking about?

MR. KOHL: My own sense is that certainly lots of auto companies and other companies

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are working on fuel cells and fuel cells in vehicles. [But] there are big questions to be solved. Are we going to make the hydrogen aboard the vehicle?

Are we going to make it elsewhere and go into building an infrastructure of hydrogen fueling stations, which would be very expensive? I don't think that issue is totally solved yet. We are going to have to use other fuels to make the hydrogen, [such as] natural gas. It may be the easiest and preferred one in the near term that I've heard about. But I've also heard that nuclear plants of some kind could be involved in making hydrogen, and maybe you want to have a comment on that.

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, [nuclear plants could be involved] through the process of hydrolysis. But I'm not familiar with the specific economics of it. Certainly the technology is there.

MS. KNUTSON: The bridging technology is the difficulty. What is the fuel source for the hydrogen? Right now, the best way to make hydrogen is through use of natural gas. That right now is still more expensive than just using regular gasoline for your cars. But as you said, that's only about 40 percent more expensive right now. And I think that we're going to be able to figure out a way to make hydrogen a lot more affordable and [to] have an ability to replace gasoline in our cars.

Nuclear [power] is certainly an option there. We're looking at all kinds of different things as well. I don't know if, Gregg, you're ever going to drive a hydrogen-fueled car, but I'd be willing to bet that your kids would.

AUDIENCE: (The questioner notes the proposed increased funding in research on new reactor designs.) What are your views [regarding the possibility] that a new administration would stop and kind of go back on nuclear power?

MODERATOR: Well, the main thing that's in the energy bill, assuming the Senate version passes, is permission and funding for the construction of a prototype advanced reactor that would be designed to be a commercial prototype.

So the thing would exist and run—in Idaho, I think—under the Senate bill. And then people would gain experience operating advanced reactors to assure themselves whether they work or not. If that reactor was successful, this would create a political argument that there was a new form of inherently safe reactor that was available for utilities. Whether that would make voters want to vote for that, I don't know. But I don't think anybody foresees the climate for nuclear [power] changing dramatically in the next one or two years, do you?

MR. BENJAMIN: Really underpinning some of the new technology that we're interested in as an operator is the advent and use of what we call passively safe reactors, where we are using the gravity and natural circulation, as opposed to having to have active components do their thing to keep the

Jeffrey Benjamin:
"THERE IS A ROLE FOR NUCLEAR [POWER] GOING FORWARD IN A DIVERSE ENERGY MIX."

reactor safe. I'll speculate here a little bit. But I think a starting point for us in considering any new reactor would be that it would be a passively safe technology. Certainly any advancement we can have—on the demonstration basis or otherwise—is of interest to us.

AUDIENCE: How do you address the problem of an increasing human population?

MR. PORTNEY: Actually, I think it's one of the advantages of the carbon credit program that as population grows and there is more demand for carbon-intensive technologies, the price of the credits goes up, which creates a huge incentive for people to come up with innovations, ways to generate electricity or to move vehicles without using carbon. So the higher that price goes, the more incentive there is for people to conserve on carbon-using fuels, and as I say and to repeat myself, the more incentive there is to find a way to do all of these things without carbon. So you really create a huge incentive that drives technology forward, and the faster [the] population growth and the more demand there is for a fixed number of credits, the stronger that price signal becomes.

MODERATOR: But it certainly is true as well that the human population is fated to grow for at least two more generations if you take United Nations projections. Energy use in the developing world not only is fated to rise, but it should rise so the developing world can enjoy the standard of living that it deserves. It's very hard to imagine the next 50 years of the world's future in which fossil fuel use does not continue to increase. So the challenge would seem to be to restrain the level of increase, to invent the technology that will eventually solve their problem, and it will be—controlling greenhouse gases will be a century-long project, even if all goes well. And it will happen under conditions of mainly human population growth.

I'm going to ask for a show of hands from the panelists [and] the audience on three questions I've been asking everybody lately. And the first question is [about] the Senate bill: yes or no, would you vote for it? You can't abstain; you've got to vote yes or no. (Half the panelists favor the bill.)

OK, which brings us to the second question: assuming it passes, will it leave unanswered major important questions? (All the panelists raise their hands.) All right, we're unanimous on that.

And the third question: assuming there was an economically attractive greenhouse control system, assuming for the sake of argument that there was one that all economists liked, would you vote for it? (Two panelists raise their hands.)

I thank all of our panelists for coming today. I thank our sponsors for hosting us, and thank you for attending.

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"The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program," the president declared. "Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons." Bush also argued that, through its ties to Al Qaeda, Iraq would be able to use biological and chemical weapons against the United States. "Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists," he warned. If Iraq had to deliver these weapons on its own, Bush said, Iraq could use the new unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that it was developing. "We have also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas," he said. "We are concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs for missions targeting the United States." This claim represented the height of absurdity. Iraq's UAVs had ranges of, at most, 300 miles. They could not make the flight from Baghdad to Tel Aviv, let alone to New York.

After the speech, when reporters pointed out that Bush's warning of an imminent threat was contradicted by Tenet's statement the same day that there was little likelihood of an Iraqi attack, Tenet dutifully offered a clarification, explaining that there was "no inconsistency" between the president's statement and his own and that he had personally fact-checked the president's speech. He also issued a public statement that read, "There is no question that the likelihood of Saddam using weapons of mass destruction against the United States or our allies ... grows as his arsenal continues to build."

Five of the nine Democrats on the Senate Intelligence Committee, including Graham and Durbin, ultimately voted against the resolution, but they were unable to convince other committee members or a majority in the Senate itself. This was at least in part because they were not allowed to divulge what they knew: While Graham and Durbin could complain that the administration's and Tenet's own statements contradicted the classified reports they had read, they could not say what was actually in those reports.

Bush, meanwhile, had no compunction about claiming that the "evidence indicates Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program." In the words of one former Intelligence Committee staffer, "He is the president of the United States. And, when the president of the United States says, 'My advisers and I have sat down, and we've read the intelligence, and we believe there is a tie between Iraq and Al Qaeda,' ... you take it seriously. It carries a huge amount of weight." Public opinion bears the former staffer out. By November 2002, a Gallup poll showed 59 percent in favor of an invasion and only 35 percent against. In a December *Los Angeles Times* poll, Americans thought, by a 90 percent to 7 percent margin, that Saddam was "currently developing weapons of mass destruction." And, in an ABC/*Washington Post* poll, 81 percent thought Iraq posed a threat to the United States. The Bush administration had won the domestic debate over Iraq—and it had done so by withholding from the public details that would have undermined its case for war.

The Battle With the Inspectors

Winter–Spring 2003

By January 2003, American troops were massing on Iraq's borders, and the U.N. Security Council had unanimously approved Resolution 1441, which afforded Saddam a "final opportunity" to disarm verifiably. The return of U.N. inspectors to Iraq after four years had raised hopes both in the United States and abroad that the conflict could be resolved peacefully. On January 20, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin launched a surprise attack on the administration's war plans, declaring bluntly, "Nothing today justifies envisaging military action." Nor was this sentiment exclusively French: By mid-January, Gallup showed that American support for the impending war had narrowed to 52 percent in favor of war and 43 percent opposed. Equally important, most of the nations that had backed Resolution 1441 were warning the United States not to rush into war, and Germany, which opposed military action, was to assume the chair of the Security Council in February, on the eve of the planned invasion.

In his State of the Union address on January 28, 2003, Bush introduced a new piece of evidence to show that Iraq was developing a nuclear arms program: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. ... Saddam Hussein has not credibly explained these activities. He clearly has much to hide."

One year earlier, Cheney's office had received from the British, via the Italians, documents purporting to show Iraq's purchase of uranium from Niger. Cheney had given the information to the CIA, which in turn asked a prominent diplomat, who had served as ambassador to three African countries, to investigate. He returned after a visit to Niger in February 2002 and reported to the State Department and the CIA that the documents were forgeries. The CIA circulated the ambassador's report to the vice president's office, the ambassador confirms to TNR. But, after a British dossier was released in September detailing the purported uranium purchase, administration officials began citing it anyway, culminating in its inclusion in the State of the Union. "They knew the Niger story was a flat-out lie," the former ambassador tells TNR. "They were unpersuasive about aluminum tubes and added this to make their case more persuasive."

On February 5, Secretary of State Colin Powell took the administration's case to the Security Council. Powell's presentation was by far the most impressive the administration would make—according to *U.S. News and World Report*, he junked much of what the CIA had given him to read, calling it "bullshit"—but it was still based on a hyped and incomplete view of U.S. intelligence on Iraq. Much of what was new in Powell's speech was raw data that had come

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into the CIA's possession but had not yet undergone serious analysis. In addition to rehashing the aluminum-tube claims, Powell charged, for instance, that Iraq was trying to obtain magnets for uranium enrichment. Powell also described a "potentially ... sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder." But Powell's evidence consisted of tenuous ties between Baghdad and an Al Qaeda leader, Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, who had allegedly received medical treatment in Baghdad and who, according to Powell, operated a training camp in Iraq specializing in poisons. Unfortunately for Powell's thesis, the camp was located in northern Iraq, an area controlled by the Kurds rather than Saddam and policed by U.S. and British warplanes. One Hill staffer familiar with the classified documents on Al Qaeda tells TNR, "So why would that be proof of some Iraqi government connection to Al Qaeda? [It] might as well be in Iran."

But, by the time Powell made his speech, the administration had stopped worrying about possible rebukes from U.S. intelligence agencies. On the contrary, Tenet sat directly behind Powell as he gave his presentation. And, with the GOP takeover of the Senate, the Intelligence Committee had passed into the hands of a docile Republican chairman, Pat Roberts of Kansas.

As POWELL CITED U.S. intelligence supporting his claim of a reconstituted nuclear weapons program in Iraq, Jacques Baute listened intently. Baute, the head of the IAEA's Iraq inspections unit, had been pestering the U.S. and British governments for months to share their intelligence with his office. Despite repeated assurances of cooperation, TNR has learned that Baute's office received nothing until the day before Powell's presentation, when the U.S. mission in Vienna provided the IAEA with an oral briefing while Baute was en route to New York, leaving no printed material with the nuclear inspectors. As IAEA officials recount, an astonished Baute told his aides, "That won't do. I want the actual documentary evidence." He had to register his complaints through a United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) channel before receiving the documents the day Powell spoke. It was an incident that would characterize America's intelligence-sharing with the IAEA.

After a few weeks of traveling back and forth between Baghdad and Vienna, Baute sat down with the dozen or so pages of U.S. intelligence on Saddam's supposed nuclear procurements—the aluminum tubes, the Niger uranium, and the magnets. In the course of a day, Baute determined, like the ambassador before him, that the Niger document was fraudulent. Though the "president" of Niger made reference to his powers under the constitution of 1965, Baute performed a quick Google search to learn that Niger's latest constitution was drafted in 1999. There were other obvious mistakes—improper letterhead, an obviously forged signature, a letter from a foreign minister who had not been in office for eleven years. Baute also made quick work of the aluminum tubes. He assembled a team of experts—two Americans, two Britons, and a German—with 120 years of collective experience with centrifuges. After reviewing tens of thousands of Iraqi transaction records and inspecting Iraqi front companies and military production facilities with the rest of the IAEA unit, they concluded, according to a senior IAEA official, that "all evidence points to that this is for the rockets"—the same conclusion reached by the State and Energy Departments. As for the magnets, the IAEA cross-referenced Iraq's declarations with intelligence from various member states and determined that nothing in Iraq's magnet procurements "pointed to centrifuge enrichment," in the words of an IAEA official with direct knowledge of the effort. Rather, the magnets were for projects as disparate as telephones and short-range missiles. Baute, who according to a senior IAEA official was in "almost daily" contact with the American diplomatic mission in Vienna, was surprised at the weakness of the U.S. evidence. In one instance, Baute contacted the mission after discovering the Niger document forgeries and asked, as this official described it, "Can your people help me understand if I'm wrong? I'm not ready to close the book on this file. If you've got any other evidence that might be authentic, I need to see it, and I'll follow up." Eventually, a response came: The Americans and the British were not disputing the IAEA's conclusions; no more evidence would be provided.

On March 7, IAEA Director-General Mohammed ElBaradei delivered Baute's conclusions to the Security Council. But, although the United States conceded most of the IAEA's inconvenient judgments behind closed doors, Vice President Cheney publicly assaulted the credibility of the organization and its director-general. "I think Mr. ElBaradei frankly is wrong," Cheney told Tim Russert on NBC's "Meet the Press" on March 16. "I think, if you look at the track record of the International Atomic Energy Agency and this kind of issue, especially where Iraq's concerned, they have consistently underestimated or missed what it was Saddam Hussein was doing. I don't have any reason to believe they're any more valid this time than they've been in the past." Incredibly, Cheney added, "We believe [Saddam] has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons."

Cheney was correct that the IAEA had failed to uncover Iraq's covert uranium-enrichment program prior to the Gulf war. But, before the war, the IAEA was not charged with playing the role of a nuclear Interpol. Rather, until the passage of Resolution 687 in 1991, the IAEA was merely supposed to review the disclosures of member states in the field of nuclear development to ensure compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. By contrast, in the '90s, the IAEA mounted more than 1,000 inspections in Iraq, mostly without advance warning; sealed, expropriated, or destroyed tons of nuclear material; and destroyed thousands of square feet of nuclear facilities. In fact, its activities formed the baseline for virtually every intelligence assessment regarding Iraq's nuclear weapons program.

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UNMOVIC Chairman Hans Blix received similar treatment from American officials—even though he repeatedly told the Security Council that the Iraqis had yet to account for the chemical and biological weapons they had once possessed, a position that strengthened the U.S. case for war. According to *The Washington Post*, in early 2002 Wolfowitz ordered a CIA report on Blix. When the report didn't contain damning details, Wolfowitz reportedly "hit the ceiling." And, as the inspections were to begin, Perle said, "If it were up to me, on the strength of his previous record, I wouldn't have chosen Hans Blix." In his February presentation, Powell suggested that Blix had ignored evidence of Iraqi chemical and biological weapons production. After stalling for months, the United States finally shared some of its intelligence with UNMOVIC. But, according to UNMOVIC officials, none of the intelligence it received yielded any incriminating discoveries.

AFTERMATH

"What we must not do in the face of a mortal threat," Cheney instructed a Nashville gathering of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August 2002, "is give in to wishful thinking or willful blindness." Cheney's admonition is resonant, but not for the reasons he intended. The Bush administration displayed an acute case of willful blindness in making its case for war. Much of its evidence for a reconstituted nuclear program, a thriving chemical-biological development program, and an active Iraqi link with Al Qaeda was based on what intelligence analysts call "rumint." Says one former official with the National Security Council, "It was a classic case of rumint, rumor-intelligence plugged into various speeches and accepted as gospel."

In some cases, the administration may have deliberately lied. If Bush didn't know the purported uranium deal between Iraq and Niger was a hoax, plenty of people in his administration did—including, possibly, Vice President Cheney, who would have seen the president's State of the Union address before it was delivered. Rice and Rumsfeld also must have known that the aluminum tubes that they presented as proof of Iraq's nuclear ambitions were discounted by prominent intelligence experts. And, while a few administration officials may have genuinely believed that there was a strong connection between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, most probably knew they were constructing castles out of sand.

The Bush administration took office pledging to restore "honor and dignity" to the White House. And it's true: Bush has not gotten caught having sex with an intern or lying about it under oath. But he has engaged in a pattern of deception concerning the most fundamental decisions a government must make. The United States may have been justified in going to war in Iraq—there were, after all, other rationales for doing so—but it was not justified in doing so on the national security grounds that President Bush put forth throughout last fall and winter. He deceived Americans about what was known of the threat from Iraq and deprived Congress of its ability to make an informed decision about whether or not to take the country to war.

The most serious institutional casualty of the administration's campaign may have been the intelligence agencies, particularly the CIA. Some of the CIA's intelligence simply appears to have been defective, perhaps innocently so. Durbin says the CIA's classified reports contained extensive maps where chemical or biological weapons could be found. Since the war, these sites have not yielded evidence of any such weapons. But the administration also turned the agency—and Tenet in particular—into an advocate for the war with Iraq at a time when the CIA's own classified analyses contradicted the public statements of the agency and its director. Did Tenet really fact-check Bush's warning that Iraq could threaten the United States with UAVs? Did he really endorse Powell's musings on the links between Al Qaeda and Saddam? Or had Tenet and his agency by then lost any claim to the intellectual honesty upon which U.S. foreign policy critically depends—particularly in an era of preemptive war?

Democrats such as Durbin, Graham, and Senator Jay Rockefeller, who has become the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, are now pressing for a full investigation into intelligence estimates of the Iraqi threat. This would entail public hearings with full disclosure of documents and guarantees of protection for witnesses who come forward to testify. But it is not likely to happen. Senator John Warner, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, initially called for public hearings but recanted after Cheney visited a GOP senators' lunch on June 4. Cheney, according to Capitol Hill staffers, told his fellow Republicans to block any investigation, and it looks likely they will comply. Under pressure from Democrats, Roberts, the new Intelligence Committee chairman, has finally agreed to a closed-door hearing but not to a public or private investigation. According to Durbin, the Republican plan is to stall in the hope that the United States finds sufficient weapons of mass destruction in Iraq to quiet the controversy.

The controversy might, indeed, go away. Democrats don't have the power to call hearings, and, apart from Graham and former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, the leading Democratic presidential candidates are treating the issue delicately given the public's overwhelming support for the war. But there are worse things than losing an election by going too far out on a political limb—namely, failing to defend the integrity of the country's foreign policy and its democratic institutions. It may well be that, in the not-too-distant future, preemptive military action will become necessary—perhaps against a North Korea genuinely bent on incinerating Seoul or a nuclear Pakistan that has fallen into the hands of radical Islamists. In such a case, we the people will look to our leaders for an honest assessment of the threat. But, next time, thanks to George W. Bush, we may not believe them until it is too late. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Chicken or the Egg

WHICH CAME FIRST, THE staples of film plots or the social behaviors that suggested them? It's a bit of a puzzle when the people in a film, individuals though they are meant to be, behave on their own as if their lives had been scripted. In **LOVE THE HARD WAY**, the two principal characters live out their lives in a pattern that they seem to have learned from films. Or was such behavior already in practice, ready to be copied, when the first screenwriters began concocting stories? Did films just capitalize on existing behavior?

LOVE THE HARD WAY
(Kino International)

THE HARD WORD
(Lions Gate)

The question arises because the basic idea of *Love the Hard Way* is like a visit from an old acquaintance. An upper-class woman gets involved with a lower-class, shady man. Both of them suffer, the man more than he thought possible. This idea is clearly global. *Love the Hard Way* takes place in New York, but it was adapted from a Chinese novel. (And one of the prominent forebears of the genre is French—*Pepe le Moko,* made in 1936.) In the present screenplay the ending is, as a variation, left ambiguous: the viewer can finish the film in his head any way he likes. Otherwise, the story is community property.

The adaptation was done by Marie Noelle and the director Peter Sehr. How closely it clings to the original by Wang Shuo this deponent knoweth not, but the novel presumably had a political comment that does not function here. Claire is a biology major at Columbia University, doing well. Jack is a Manhattan shakedown operator. Claire does not learn until much later that Jack, with a friend, makes money by getting two women they know to pose as hookers who lure Asian businessmen to hotel rooms. Then Jack and friend, dressed in police uniforms, burst in and collect payoffs to let the customers go free.

Claire and Jack meet first at a downtown film theater where she works part-time. (So the story is figuratively born in film.) They meet again on the Columbia campus, where he has gone to collect a gambling debt. (So their romance also wends through the groves of academe.) We might think that a young woman of her age and intelligence would steer clear of Jack, but two forces propel her otherwise. First, sex: Jack, in his scruffy, self-confident, gabby way, has the attraction of difference from her clean-cut boyfriend. Second, Claire almost seems to know her role in this story. Life is not imitating art, it is—unwittingly, perhaps—conforming to grooves that films have engraved in the brain. Yet, almost like watching a familiar ballet, it is interesting to see the pattern being fulfilled, and with some vernacular grace.

One other variation in the scenario follows a severe quarrel between the two lovers. Claire works for a time as a hooker—to hurt Jack, who knows about it, and to punish herself for having descended to him. The story then has a time lapse that allows her to get back to the biology lab and eventually to a re-meeting with Jack. As noted, the ending is up to us.

Sehr has directed with an eye as keen as the story needs (perhaps he's a little too reliant on overhead shots), and he has gauged the right emotional pressure levels for his cast. The production designer, Debbie DeVilla, makes the crummy settings of Jack's environment underscore his crummy empiricism. Claire is played by Charlotte Ayanna, who persuades both as a science major and as a young woman of bosomy sexual responsiveness. What we know from the start, and what Claire surely also knows but puts aside—perhaps because of prototypical films in her head—is that she is in for trouble.

But the credibility of the story depends on Jack, on his attraction. The biggest surprise in the film is that Adrien Brody provides that credibility, amply. With his anteater nose and skinny frame, he nonetheless makes Jack an insinuating latter-day rascal whose hatred of the humdrum enables him to exploit those who want the safety of the humdrum. Brody creates exactly the taunting demi-monster who could inveigle Claire. The screenplay has him scribbling away in his spare time at a novel, but Brody didn't need this additive to prove that there is more to Jack than guile. Just as Jean Gabin gave Pepe le Moko more soul than the man thought he had, so Brody—without coming anywhere near Gabin's power—makes Jack more interesting than the life he leads.

Brody was first prominently seen in the title role of *The Pianist,* a character more prevailed upon than prevailing. *Love the Hard Way* was reportedly made before the Polanski picture, which raises a curious point that has nothing to do with either film intrinsically. If the pictures had been released in the order of their making, Brody's performance in Polanski's film might have seemed more of an achievement. We would not only have had more sense of Brody's range but of the choices that he had made in portraying the pianist.

THE HARD WORD, not to be confused with the above film, is not another example of the way that film can influence behavior, so it raises no chicken-or-egg question. There were plentiful crime plays that called for the audience to sympathize with the criminal long before film was invented. But how could theater give us the immediacy of film? Murders have gripped audiences ever since Athens, but only film could seem to put a machine gun or pistol or stiletto right in our hands. In that regard, with pseudo verity triumphing over imagination, *Scarface* outdoes *Macbeth.*

But *The Hard Word* is not just a crime film; it is another instance of that perennial sub-genre, the heist film. Why does the heist film thrive so continually all

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around the world? Unlike the Sehr picture above, it is far distant from likelihood in our lives. Apparently we need it because it's an accessible tonic against society's crampings. A heist story permits us namby-pambys to attack the conventions that force us to be neat, punctual, honest. The heist not only sweeps us into anarchic action—thousands of films can do that—it makes us smarter than all those people who count on us not to make trouble.

The latest, merely by the margin of a week or so, is this *Hard Word,* which arrives from Australia. There are three heists in it, yet the only fresh touch is that the three leading crooks are brothers. They spend (relatively short) interludes in prison between bank robberies while their lawyer schemes up new heists for them when they get out. One of the brothers has a blonde wife who consults that lawyer for more than legal counsel, so there's another predictable story strand.

But the tonic works once again. At the least—and it's close to the least—*The Hard Word* gives us 103 minutes of freedom from the frustrations that the good life imposes on us. Well, most of us. ■

Jackson Lears

Sanctimonies

HELLFIRE NATION: THE POLITICS OF SIN IN AMERICAN HISTORY
By James A. Morone
(Yale University Press, 575 pp., $35)

I.

OCCASIONALLY ADOLESCENT high jinks affect the history of thought. Consider the episode recounted by Augustine in his *Confessions.* "There was a pear tree near our vineyard, loaded with a fruit that was attractive neither to look at nor to taste. Late one night a band of ruffians, myself included, went off to shake down the fruit and carry it away.... We took away an enormous quantity of pears, not to eat them ourselves, but simply to throw them to the pigs." Augustine agonized at length about the sheer perversity of his motives. "Could I enjoy doing wrong for no other reason than that it was wrong?" Certainly, "it was not the pears that my unhappy soul desired. I had plenty of my own, better than those, and I only picked them so that I might steal. For no sooner had I picked them than I threw them away, and tasted nothing in them but my own sin, which I relished and enjoyed. If any part of one of those pears passed my lips, it was the sin that gave it flavor." And so a boyish escapade became a primary text of Christian thinking about sin.

For what became known as the Augustinian view, sin was a subjective experience, a self-satisfied pride that allowed the sinner to take pleasure in acts that actually alienated him from God, the source of all being. To be sure, sin had a social dimension, too. Stealing the pears by himself, Augustine wrote, "would have been no fun and I should not have done it." The desire to have "partners in sin" made it harder to exercise moral responsibility, "because we are ashamed to hold back when others say 'Come on! Let's do it!' " But at bottom the Augustinian conception of sin was more psychological than social: it was an elusive but innate perversity—a tendency toward estrangement from all creation—rooted in every human soul, which could only be transcended with the aid of divine grace.

Of course there have always been other ways of thinking about sin. The chief alternative to Augustine's inward emphasis was the notion that evil is a palpable entity outside the self, one that could (and often did) take material and even fleshly form. The purest form of this belief in Augustine's time was the Manichaean heresy. Augustine had been a Manichee himself for ten years, and much of the intellectual drive of his autobiography arises from his struggle to free himself from the Manichees' materialist conception of evil by developing a subtler one. But subtlety never translated easily into the idioms of popular Christianity, which imagined sin embodied in either an actual devil or a demonized other—the witch, the infidel, above all the Jew. Though theologians condemned the Manichaean heresy, the Manichaean tendency to divide the world into a virtuous "us" and a sinful "them" flourished in Christian tradition, animating absolutisms, inspiring crusades, and consigning the other to flames in the next world and sometimes in this one.

Still, Augustinian ideas survived, too. They sustained the doctrine of original sin, which despite its sometimes devastating impact on the human psyche at least preserved an emphasis on the universality of human corruption, refusing to isolate sin in particular groups of offenders. For centuries, when Christians thought seriously about sin, they turned to Augustinian tradition. The English Puritans who settled North America, for example, were nothing if not serious about sin. They insisted on a covenant of grace, not of works. This meant that the performance of apparently moral acts was mere mummery without a regenerate heart. The key to salvation was not morality, it was piety—the spiritual state that resulted from an intense inner search for union with the deity.

This was precisely the sort of struggle that Augustine described, and it was at the core of American Puritanism. Oscillating between an exalted experience of divine grace and a deep sense of human depravity (including one's own), the Augustinian strain of piety dissolved the comforting delusion that evil could be situated outside the self. The attempt to live virtuously required constant questioning of one's own motives, constant awareness of one's own capacity to confuse self-interest with self-sacrifice. Sin was fleeting, insubstantial, evanescent—but ever-present, in the hearts of the pious as well as the prodigal.

This was not a worldview likely to launch moral crusades. Manichaean tendencies re-surfaced from time to time, as in the Pequot War and the Salem witch trials, but what is surprising is how long Augustinian ideas continued to check tendencies toward self-righteousness among the Puritans and their successors. Well into the early nineteenth century, as the historian Karen Halttunen has discovered, ministers characterized condemned murderers as common sinners, whose evil deeds were simply a particularly vile example of the vileness in all human beings. It was only with the spread of the Enlightenment faith in human goodness that the murderer began to be seen as a monster, "a fiend in human form." If human nature

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was inherently benign, then sin might be the result of inhuman monstrosity or (later in the nineteenth century) racial inferiority—unless one took the reformist view, which traced even radical evil to a poor environment or a weak character, which could be strengthened or improved. In this way the waning of belief in original sin paved the way for the demonization—but also the reform—of the other. Moral crusades against sin depended on the peculiarly modern assumption that sin could be eradicated. This was a far cry from Augustine.

AUGUSTINIAN IDEAS CONTINued to deepen American Protestant thought, as Christopher Lasch and Andrew Delbanco have reminded us by illuminating the philosophical lineage from Jonathan Edwards to Martin Luther King Jr. But among more pedestrian thinkers, a new and easier conception of virtue emerged. Protestant theology gave way to Protestant ethics, which in turn became barely distinguishable from bourgeois conformity and respectability—a self-satisfied moralism that has shaped our public discourse down to the present, though it would have appalled Augustine. Occasionally it has even appalled American moralists themselves, who have periodically demanded that attention be paid to slaves, child laborers, destitute families, and other victims of the vagaries of fortune.

Yet such humanitarian sympathies could be only fitfully sustained in a society given over to the pursuit of private gain. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the spread of market-based individualism had sanitized self-interest, transforming it from a source of sin to a seat of virtue. In the emerging utilitarian moral climate, sin was less a complex mental state than a set of nasty habits, all of which involved straying from the hard path of self-control into the swamps of sensual self-indulgence. Guardians of official virtue became a recognizable social type, from Anthony Comstock (who saved us from the menace of birth-control literature) to William Bennett (who saved us from the menace of marijuana). These were men whose public passion for righteousness provoked suspicions of hypocrisy, and delight among sinners when evidence of it was found—as in the recent revelations concerning Bennett's particular vice.

Another pillar of rectitude had been exposed as a hypocrite, it seemed, and yet a fuller criticism of the gambler Bennett rests on more than charges of hypocrisy. After all, Bennett never condemned gambling, and his own Roman Catholic tradition fostered a certain cautious acceptance of it (though not of his fantastic excess). The irony is that while the gambler's ethos may have sometimes encouraged forgiveness for human imperfection and generosity toward people who were down on their luck, Bennett the moralist never showed a trace of such empathetic and expansive traits. Apart from his gambling, he was as dedicated as any fundamentalist scold to enforcing a narrow and thoroughly politicized version of the Protestant ethic—kicking welfare mothers off the dole, imprisoning pot smokers, impeaching libidinous presidents.

Bennett's disgrace is a characteristic episode in American cultural history. Has any other country produced so many experts on sin? Certainly no European country—or at least so Bennett claimed at the height of his clamor for Clinton's impeachment. "Morality is central to our politics and attitudes in a way that is not the case in Europe," he wrote. Indeed, "our moral streak is what is best about us." It gives us the gumption to save the world from fascism and communism. And now "worldly wise" and "sophisticated" liberals were dismissing the president's peccadilloes, denying our American moral heritage, and threatening to turn us "European." The contrast between American virtue and European vice has been a key notion in the American rhetoric of national self-congratulation since the days of the early republic. It reveals the Manichaean tendency at work in international affairs, creating an exceptionalist myth of American innocence amid a corrupt world. Like generations of American moralists before him, Bennett linked the public fate of the nation with the private sins of its citizens.

Long before feminists formulated the slogan "the personal is political," moral reformers were enacting it. For centuries, the minor missteps of ordinary folk had been beneath the notice of the governing classes. But in a democratic nation increasingly enveloped by an intrusive ethic of self-control, smoking, drinking, gambling, and even masturbation became matters of public debate. The politics of sin, in sum, is as American as cherry pie. So argues James A. Morone in his new book, and he is surely right. But the larger issue, which he never addresses, is whether the very notion of a "politics of sin" requires a simple-minded Manichaean definition of evil—that is, whether politics inevitably trivializes sin. Certainly Augustine would suspect as much, and the evidence amassed by Morone would support his suspicion.

II.

"WHAT MAKES THE UNITed States distinctive?" Morone asks. "There are plenty of celebrated views, but most ignore the restless American quest for heaven." Yearnings for salvation spill into the public arena, creating a morally charged political life filled with pitched battles between the worthy and the licentious. This is the story that Morone tells. From the tragic Civil War to the farcical "culture wars," American politics has been pervaded by passionate indignation. "For better and for worse," Morone writes, "moral conflicts made America."

Morone's argument will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with American religious and cultural history. Since the era of Perry Miller in the 1950s, historians have been identifying the furious moral and religious energies at the heart of political controversy. They have demonstrated that to inspire popular support, the American Revolution and the Civil War were rhetorically transformed into apocalyptic crusades. They have shown how longings for salvation could intensify social movements—as evangelical perfectionism led to demands for immediate abolition of slavery. They have dissected the missionary impulses in American diplomacy, the biblical resonances in the civil rights movement, and more generally the centrality of Protestant Christianity in American political culture.

Morone's book usefully synthesizes this historiography for those unfamiliar with it, which apparently includes much of the political science profession. From his own perspective inside that profession, Morone implies, American political history looks like a secular landscape of pragmatic compromise, pluralistic consensus, and coalition-building. From the Enlightenment rationalists who framed the Constitution to the contemporary lobbyists who scuffle for a place at the deregulation buffet, American politics has been characterized by the bland, deal-making ethos of interest-group liberalism. (Just as James Madison said it would be.) To counter this misconception, Mo-

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rone has assembled a catalogue of revivalists and precisionists, bluenoses and witch-hunters and scolds, mixed in with a handful of heroes.

There is something intriguing about this promiscuous assemblage. It almost lives up to the jacket-copy promise of "the story of a brawling, raucous, religious people." Millennial utopians crowd up against bureaucratic administrators, politicians against ideologues. Frances Willard marches cheek by jowl with Comstock and Woodrow Wilson, William Lloyd Garrison with Lincoln and Walter Lippmann. But none ever comes to life, perhaps because Morone is intent (like a good social scientist) on repeatable patterns rather than idiosyncratic details. Morone finds "exactly the same cycle—persuasion, prohibition, and state power—in the campaigns against slavery or segregation or nineteenth-century abortionists." Efforts to stamp out sin always enhanced the health of the state.

The only distinction that Morone makes among his dramatis personae is between evangelicals who wanted government to coerce individual compliance with moral norms and social gospelers who wanted government to make better citizens by transforming their economic and cultural circumstances. The evangelicals located moral responsibility in the soul of the sinner; the social gospelers spread it around and sometimes (according to their critics) made it disappear. It is not clear from Morone's book how these two radically different points of view arose or diverged (they seem to drop from the sky), but there is no question which side Morone is on. He is pulling for the social gospel team, and by the end of the book—the present day—things are not looking good. The idea of society's collective moral responsibility for the less fortunate has been relegated to the dustbin of American political memory, along with the LBJ posters and other remnants of the Great Society.

Morone has unfashionably humane political instincts, but in the end *Hellfire Nation* disappoints. Its abundant typographical errors and misspellings of proper names would be tedious to enumerate. (The chief justice who handed down the *Dred Scott* decision, for example, is repeatedly identified as Tawney rather than Taney, a mistake that captures the idiosyncratic Maryland pronunciation at the expense of orthography.) It omits some of the most significant moral crusades, such as those for and against capital punishment; and it pays minimal attention to the enormously important subject of foreign policy. Morone observes that the Puritans' "city on a hill" became "an increasingly self-conscious exemplar to the world" from colonial times forward, but he fails to note the transition from exemplar to exporter of morality—an idea that energized Manifest Destiny and imperialism, and came to bitter fruition in the Vietnam War, and has recently been resurrected by the neoconservatives around the White House. Clearly there is a potent international dimension to the American politics of sin.

But the problem with this book is subtler and deeper than a catalogue of errors and omissions. Morone does not seem to understand the distinction between belief and morality, between yearnings for salvation in heaven and for a righteous community on earth. Never afraid of mixing metaphors, he writes that "what leaps out, loudest and clearest [in the American story], is the search for eternal salvation through Christ's grace. Morality mattered most in early America. It still matters—enormously—today." These statements are conceptually and theologically confused. The "search for eternal salvation" by no means required the imposition of norms on recalcitrant populations. For under a covenant of grace, moralism raised doubts that what moralists demanded was anything more than mere "works." Far from being an entirely secular enterprise, American liberalism has been tangled from the beginning in "the search for God, the moral urge," Morone remarks—but these two phrases describe profoundly different and even antithetical impulses. The search for God could run counter to the moral urge, or at least counter to the conventional version of it.

This was especially true when the seeker disdained religious institutions and sought to experience grace directly, by means of an ecstatic connection with God. In New England, such longings surfaced as early as 1637, when the Puritan mystic Anne Hutchinson challenged the orthodox for failing to sustain a covenant of grace. She was tried and found guilty of "antinomianism," the heretical notion that grace set Christians free from the need to observe moral law. The word has

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become scholars' shorthand for romantic rebellions in the name of authentic personal experience, spiritual or (more loosely) secular. The antinomian impulse was at the core of American Protestants' repeated revivals of "true religious feeling." Impatient with anything that obstructed direct experience of the deity, antinomians inevitably threatened ecclesiastical authority.

Though Morone finds antinomians everywhere in American political history, he never really approaches them on their own turf. He is determined to stay outside the individual religious consciousness. His focus on the politics of sin requires him to use the criterion of quick identification, of public opinion: what lots of people can immediately identify as sin is sin. This sociological determinism flattens his discussion, deprives it of psychological depth, and makes antinomianism even more baffling than it probably was. In the waves of revivals that swept across North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the desire for a more intense and immediate identification with God ignited powerful challenges to the established moral order—deemed "dead" by the revivalists because lacking in grace. What was condemned as sin by the officially virtuous was in the eyes of antinomian rebels a more rigorous quest for the divine.

Among thinkers in the Augustinian tradition, antinomian piety also promoted a subtle and demanding definition of virtue as the disinterested expression of "benevolence toward Being in general," as Edwards put it in *The Nature of True Virtue* (1764). Sin was indifference to "the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of Divinity"—estrangement from God. Only a regenerate heart could truly produce virtuous acts, in the Edwardsean view.

But at about the same time profoundly different conceptions of virtue were acquiring unprecedented legitimacy. Benjamin Franklin, for one, was embarking on his "bold and arduous project of achieving moral perfection" through double-entry bookkeeping, carefully recording his accumulated virtues and vices. One can only imagine Edwards's bafflement. Yet Franklin's view would prevail. His utilitarian precision caught the commercial spirit of the age. Antinomians did not stand a chance against someone with that kind of moral clarity.

Hellfire Nation is largely the story of Benjamin Franklin's moralism, not Jonathan Edwards's piety. This is mostly because Morone is determined to understand sin in sociological categories—specifically the "race, class, and gender" mantra that dominates contemporary scholarship in social and cultural history. The problem with much of this scholarship is not that those categories are unimportant, but that too often they are deployed as if they exhausted all possible interpretations of human experience. With respect to sin, this will never do.

Yet Morone seems intent on reducing the politics of sin to a series of pitched battles between "us" and "them." Though sexual anxieties often complicate the picture, the central conflicts are racial and ethnic. As early as 1752, Franklin fretted that the disagreeable Germans were taking over Pennsylvania; and Morone takes this ball and runs with it. Franklin's complaint revealed "a fundamental question about American community," he maintains. "Can we be a single—special—people? With *them*? Or will their lax values undermine our virtuous community?" These are the questions that increasingly dominate the book and eventually take it over completely. They are not trivial questions, but they trivialize the question of sin. They reduce wrongdoing to a violation of community values.

Of course this is a legitimate, if limited, definition of evil, and Morone gets some good mileage out of it. No student of American history can deny the centrality of morally charged conflict between insiders and outsiders, respectable folk and pariahs—the latter often defined in racial terms. At decisive moments, the response to a dark-skinned other has played a crucial role in maintaining a dominant (white) consensus. Talking about race has been a way of not talking about class. Manichaean moralism has repeatedly created, re-affirmed, and revitalized American identity by posing a virtuous "us" against a sinful "them." This interpretation can be made persuasively, but like most it can also be oversimplified. Morone's book does both, gradually losing focus as its story nears the present day.

III.

MORONE BEGINS HIS TALE in the colonial era, leaping from the city on a hill to the witch trials, from the Great Awakening to the Revolution. When he reaches the abolitionists, though, he adopts a more leisurely pace. These are people whom he can more easily harness to his progressive purposes. "The new [anti-slavery] organizations raised all kinds of hell: They recruited women and black people. They promoted radical ideas, like racial justice and feminism." Their transgressive power intensifies when we consider their sexual radicalism, actual or alleged. Seeing white women and black men mingling at anti-slavery meetings, established male elites slid into sexual panic, howling that "amalgation" was at hand. Abolitionists pushed America to an "existentialist [sic] crisis," not just about slavery but about the nature of black people in society (women too), and finally "about the nature of the United States and its most fundamental principles."

Despite his political sentiments, Morone does not assume that history is a tale told by an enlightened liberal, signifying progress. He untangles the race and class issues provoked by the rising anti-slavery debate, finding ignoble intent on both sides. He recognizes that both Northern free labor and Southern slavery were methods of social control based on distancing and controlling a racial other. "Even as northerners marched to the Civil War they had no design for freeing slaves and no desire to live with black people." The postwar "betrayal of the Negro" was really a fulfillment of the prewar Republican vision of a free-laboring commonwealth, and the key to sectional rapprochement was racism. After Appomattox, North and South alike found ways to turn the economic gap between the races into a question of vice and virtue. The righteous community purified itself by enforcing the ethic of self-control and keeping the sinful other at bay.

Though this story is familiar and depressing, it bears retelling. But does it really have much to do with sin, except the simplest social meanings of sin? Attitudes toward sin had a more complex historical significance than merely the maintenance of white power and bourgeois respectability. The waning of belief in original sin in antebellum America not only transformed public views of crime and moral responsibility, but also fostered agendas of personal and national perfection—agendas bolder and more arduous than Franklin's. Antinomian perfectionism drove Garrison and other abolitionists to risk disgrace and reprisal in their campaign against slavery. But perfectionism could also reinforce complacency by feeding dreams of national purification,

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especially in the North—the belief, for example, that the Union armies were "the armies of the Lord." Once again, dualistic habits of mind kept sin safely at a distance.

The only political leader, North or South, who effectively resisted the Manichaean temper in morality was Abraham Lincoln. He sustained the Augustinian insight that no American was untainted by the original sins of slavery and racism. A tragedy on the scale of the Civil War was too vast to be reduced to a moral crusade. The staggering losses of the war, Lincoln concluded in his genuinely majestic Second Inaugural Address, constituted a national blood ritual of expiation. He found it impossible to isolate evil in any particular demons, even Southern slaveholders. All human beings, from Lincoln's Augustinian perspective, were steeped in sin but still susceptible to forgiveness and redemption. The amazing sentences are always worth reading again: "Both [sides] read the same Bible, and pray to the same God, and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully." The Second Inaugural Address may have been the most profound moment in the American politics of sin, and perhaps in American politics altogether.

AFTER THE WAR, WITH SLAVERY removed as a national moral issue, public talk about sin focused on patrolling the boundaries of personal conduct. Gusts of moral panic swept through American culture between the Civil War and World War I, creating feverish crusades against prostitution, gambling, drug use, smoking, and (most successfully) drinking. The national prohibition of alcohol marked the apotheosis of evangelical Protestant mores as the official American morality. This ethos defined sin in narrowly personal terms, granting government unprecedented power to intrude into people's private lives—for their own good, of course.

To Morone, all of this ferment was about asserting the power and the authority of the WASP bourgeoisie ("us") over European immigrants and people of color ("them"). This sociological perspective illuminates certain important connections between prohibitionist fervor and the lynching of black men (alcohol allegedly inflamed their lust for white women), or between anti-Semitism and the "white slave panic" of the early 1900s. (Jews from New York cruised New England and Pennsylvania, *McClure's* magazine reported in 1909, enticing country girls into lives of prostitution.) For fifty years after the Civil War, the sexual, racial, and class fears of middle-class white people intermingled in various dark demons.

Yet this purely social approach invariably flattens the personal into the political, oversimplifying the complexity of everyone's motives. One gets no sense that some of these reform movements involved self-culture—a vision of human aspiration and achievement—as well as self-control. Ideals of self-discipline were not merely imposed from above by blue-nosed elites; they also sometimes resonated with the desires of the less fortunate: for social status or moral improvement, for security or stability, even for simple survival. Motives of the reformed as well as the reformers were tangled and ambivalent. Yet most of the time the reformers had more power. They did not create the desire for family stability, but they could coerce the reformed into taking a particular path to that goal. They could pass laws and put people in jail for not complying with them. Complex private needs had straightforward public consequences. The personal and the political intertwined; but the really significant question is how to puzzle out more capacious connections between them.

One intriguing possibility (mentioned but not explored by Morone) concerns the increasing physicality of sin. Despite the inanity of so much contemporary academic talk about "the body," there is no doubt that nineteenth-century moral furor was focused increasingly on the flesh rather than on the spirit. By the early twentieth century, the dimensions of the debate about sin had shrunk to fit the bodily human form. Given reformers' obsessions with sex, drugs, and alcohol, it often seemed that what was most on their minds was what people did or did not put into their bodies. Purity crusaders seemed ever more insistent on creating and maintaining pollution taboos. A successful pollution taboo, as the anthropologist Mary Douglas argued long ago, depended on a symbolic linkage between the individual body and the larger community—social cohesion required purification rituals, which included the patrolling of individual as well as communal boundaries.

Just as the ingestion of certain pollutants could be forbidden for both social and personal reasons, prohibitions on alcohol, drugs, or interracial sex could serve different purposes in different contexts. By the 1910s, perfectionist impulses led in a variety of directions. While backcountry fundamentalists preached striving for moral perfection, early corporate advertising presented images of physical perfection on the Anglo-Saxon model—the Holeproof Hosiery girl, the Arrow Collar man. This reversed Protestant procedure by reducing virtue to a matter of bodily appearance. World War I brought all the drives for national and personal purification together in a rhetoric of "national sacrifice and special virtue," Morone concludes, noting that wars offer special opportunities for enforcing moral conformity: "Convince the majority that they face wicked people, and the miscreants' rights evaporate."

These last observations begin to raise some real questions regarding the politics of sin with respect to war—perhaps especially the wars conducted by modern industrial states, wars that are often fought at a distance and depend more on acquiescence than engagement among the populace. During the decades after World War I, it was possible for anyone without ideological blinders to identify the demonic dictators on the world stage—and pardonable to view them in Manichaean terms, as palpable embodiments of evil outside the self. But what about the faceless functionaries who implemented the incineration of civilian populations? They might be good family men, paragons of private virtue. And sometimes they might even be Americans.

In modern war, bureaucratic rationalization and technological sophistication combined to envelop violence in euphemism and to obscure personal moral responsibility. The division of labor in twentieth-century war machines, their tendency to dissolve moral choice in a bland porridge of process—these developments put a new spin on the old Augustinian suspicion of the desire to fit in. By hanging back, by refusing to prevent what should be prevented, could one be complicit in evil? In the century of total war, questions of complicity haunted Reinhold Niebuhr, Hannah Arendt, and other serious thinkers about evil and sin.

Morone gestures briskly toward the moral issues surrounding modern war, but he turns most of his attention to a more easily domesticated theme: the rise

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and fall of the social gospel effort to subvert the purity crusaders' definition of sin. From the New Deal on, "the fault line would run right through the rest of the century—vice versus illness, crime versus public health, individual sin versus social responsibility." By now Morone has nearly lost sight of sin altogether, as he traces moral conflict in recent American history through a series of familiar episodes: the civil rights movement and the white recoil against it; the movement to stop abortion; the war on drugs. The key to just about all these controversies was race, or so he insists.

This preoccupation with race prevents *Hellfire Nation* from addressing the complex cultural sources of these moral conflicts. The war on drugs (or at least the war on marijuana) has not been simply a race war, but also a sustained effort to exorcise the countercultural demons that still haunt the imagination of the righteous community. The dream of a "drug-free America" resurrects the old agenda of national purification through the maintenance of pollution taboos. Nor is racial backlash a full explanation for the decline of the social gospel tradition. There were problems in the tradition itself, sentimentalizing and relativizing tendencies that left reformers increasingly vulnerable to moralists' complaints.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the social gospel version of reform politics had lost touch with Augustinian tradition, indeed with any sense of the intractability of evil. Arguments about the environmental causation of crime still had merit, but too often they were expressed in therapeutic clichés that undermined any sense of personal responsibility. When I taught in what was euphemistically called a "reform school" during the early 1970s, for example, the phrase "a cry for help" covered a multitude of sins—from cutting up in class to taking a swing at the teacher. The spread of psychobabble provoked thoughtful liberal criticism, but also a visceral right-wing reaction. Without a compelling moral dimension, the ethos of collective responsibility for the unfortunate fell victim to racially charged resentments. Morone has little or nothing to say about this attenuation of the social gospel tradition.

Nor does he have much to say about the moral struggles provoked by the Vietnam War. This is a curious omission. The war was perhaps the most dramatic episode in the recent history of the politics of sin, and it led some Americans beyond stale dualisms to a more profound contemplation of evil. Apart from a few perfunctory quotes from antiwar leaders, Morone treats opposition to the war as largely an extension of the "antinomian" antics of the counterculture. This dismissive view is consistent with present-day cultural fashion, but it hardly does justice to the evidence. All the theatrics of the counterculture notwithstanding, the effort to stop the Vietnam War created one of the most heterogeneous moral reform movements in American history, one that crossed racial, economic, and cultural lines and included previously apolitical housewives, businessmen, and union workers as well as students, peace activists, and Vietnam veterans.

Like defenders of the war, many antiwar spokesmen yielded to the Manichaean temptation. Civility was in short supply. For many Americans, however, the disaster in Vietnam offered an occasion for urgent but sustained moral reflection. Those who chose to resist the war often did so because they believed they had to end their complicity with government-sponsored evil, however passive and insulated from danger their position might be. Some of them may have even been implicit Augustinians, steeled against self-righteousness by awareness of their own imperfections but still capable of moral responsibility. It is an outlook still worth cultivating in this era of cocky strategic pre-emption and official American perfection, when Manichaean thinking seeps through the corridors of power, as if a simplification of conscience is required for our security or our identity. ■

Ingrid D. Rowland
Love and Money

TRYING NEAIRA: THE TRUE STORY OF A COURTESAN'S SCANDALOUS LIFE IN ANCIENT GREECE
By Debra Hamel
(Yale University Press, 224 pp., $24.95)

AMONG THE SPEECHES attributed in surviving manuscripts to the ancient Greek orator Demosthenes are a number of courtroom harangues that were actually composed and delivered by his more seamy contemporary Apollodoros, the Athenian lawyer. None is quite as gripping, and occasionally horrific, as Apollodoros's long tirade as prosecutor against a fiftyish Corinthian matron named Neaira. Sometime between 343 and 340 B.C.E., Apollodoros accused Neaira of living with an Athenian citizen named Stephanos as his lawful wife, at a time when binding marriages between Athenian men and non-Athenian women were forbidden. By the time the couple came to trial, they had been living together for thirty years. If Apollodoros succeeded in making his case, Stephanos could expect to be fined an amount that equaled three years' income. Neaira could expect to be sold into slavery.

But Apollodoros did not need to make his case in order to achieve his true purpose. What he really wanted to do was to stir up further trouble for a man who had been his inveterate enemy for years. This was a city-state in which trials were public spectacles and jurors numbered in the hundreds if not thousands—Neaira's case was heard by 501 men. And so Apollodoros could create more than enough trouble for Stephanos by doing no more than airing a few stories about the first half of Neaira's life, about those twenty-odd years before she settled down in Athens with her Athenian lover.

From its opening paragraph, Debra Hamel's account of Neaira's trial exploits all the story's potential:

> The prosecutor was in his early fifties, boorish and unattractive, to judge by the description he had given of himself some ten years before, and with a booming voice that carried well in the court. It was early yet, an hour or two into a trial that would last the rest of the day. The 501 jurors hearing the case were not yet distracted by grumbling stom-

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achs and the thought of collecting their wages when the verdict was in. Apollodoros was just getting started on his denunciation of the defendant, Neaira.... "A bunch of them had sex with her while she was drunk," he tells the jurors, describing the aftermath of a dinner party given some thirty years before. "Even the slaves."... In the Athenian law courts of the fourth century B.C., relevance, and the truth itself, very often took a back seat to a more urgent concern, rousing the jurors' hostility, by any means possible, against one's opponent.

In other words, what we hear about Neaira from Apollodoros need not have been entirely true. But what we hear, even if exaggerated, is lurid enough. Her life before Stephanos was the life, as Hamel candidly puts it, of a sex slave—a calling in which Neaira, owing to her beauty and her skill, eventually amassed enough money to buy her own freedom at the age of about twenty-five.

Modern readers may find that Neaira's prosecutors and jurors are the ones who condemn themselves of scandalous living, by accepting the terms on which Neaira had to make her way as a woman of ancient Greece. Ancient Greek vases, some illustrated in Hamel's text, show what Neaira's colleagues, called *hetairai,* or "companions," were doing a few generations before her. On wine cup after wine cup, the anonymous Athenian vase artist known as the Brygos Painter traces the exquisite outlines in black on red of painfully young, beautiful women, their short hair identifying them as foreign-born slaves, who stand by patiently as the long-limbed, gilded youths of Athens stagger, sing, grope, flail their walking sticks, and vomit as if they own the world; and indeed they do. Hamel shows also a far less skillfully painted vase in which a kneeling, naked prostitute kisses the hand of a reclining youth as, in the background, another boy nurses great dark bruises; presumably we see the end of a fight for the girl's favors, which are now offered to the victor in an act of abject submission.

The great Pericles would call these men and their kind "the school of Hellas," and "lovers of beauty without excess, lovers of wisdom without softness," even as he admonished their womenfolk to hold their tongues. By then Athens was the greatest, wealthiest power in the Greek world, a city that put its heart and soul as well as its bounteous silver coinage not only into its navy, but also into works of art and literature: the Acropolis with its forest of sculpture; the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes; the histories of the immigrant Herodotus and the native Thucydides.

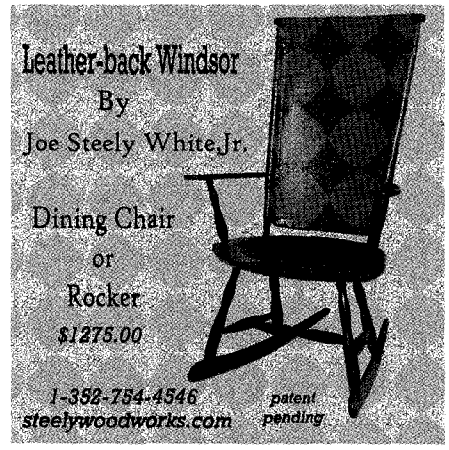
How can it be, then, that one of the most informative sources about women's life in ancient Athens seems to be Apollodoros's scurrilous attack on a former sex slave who moved into a self-sufficient, comparatively decorous retirement? For this argument from social history is how Neaira's trial has become so well known; under such a pretext the trial serves, for example, as one of the first readings given to students of elementary Greek in the textbooks issued by Cambridge University Press for Britain's Joint Association of Classical Teachers. (The case certainly holds students' attention.)

NEAIRA HAS ENJOYED HER SUCcess partly because the study of the ancient classics, especially the Greek classics, has often taken a misogynistic turn, from Aristotle in the fourth century before the Christian era, with his contention that women were biologically definable as imperfect men, to Angelo Poliziano in the fifteenth century, with his vicious invective against old women. Their prejudices, and those of figures such as the grumpy ancient Greek poets Semonides and Theognis, were adopted happily by many a don, professor, and schoolmaster of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the breed is by no means extinct in the opening of the twenty-first. As the Greeks were among the first to show, great insight often goes hand in hand with great blindness.

But not every ancient Greek, nor every ancient Athenian, saw women without really seeing them. Certainly not Homer, whose "wise Penelope" more than equals the wiles of her husband Odysseus: when they reunite at last, time itself stops to pay them joint honor. And certainly not the tragedians. Aeschylus's Clytemnestra was upstaging Agamemnon long before Athens' Theater of Dionysus ever had a stage. When Sophocles's Ajax tells his wife that "silence adorns a woman," he is in the grip of suicidal madness and his protesting wife is absolutely right; when Sophocles's Creon explains to outspoken Antigone that her loyalty to religion should submit to his reasons of state, he slips into blasphemy and reveals himself as a crazy tyrant. When Euripides's Medea says that she would rather face battle many times than give birth once, she may be enunciating a statistic about the risks of childbirth that was familiar to every veteran of Athens' many wars.

And then there is Plato, the radical who proclaimed the equality of men and women for his ideal republic. Like the tragedians, and unlike the prosecutor Apollodoros, Plato is a writer of infinite subtlety; he aspired to be a playwright himself, and his dramatic gift shows in his dialogues. His most compelling female figure is also his most enigmatic, and she appears in what may be the most perfectly realized of all his surviving compositions: Diotima, the prophetess of Mantinea, who appears near the climax of the *Symposium* to give Socrates a lesson in the ways of love. At least since the fifteenth century, when it was translated into Latin by the Christian Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino, Plato's *Symposium* has often been read (especially by the scholars and the artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) as Plato's own writ rather than as a dramatic dialogue.

What a mistake! The byplay of character and timing that would have made Plato a brilliant dramatist places the dialogue's every speech about love in its own peculiar light: thus the comic poet Aristophanes hiccups right through the physician Eryximachus's long-winded exposition of love's clinical effects; and it is not Plato who says that there are two kinds of love, the heavenly and the mundane, it is



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comely, air-headed Phaedrus. (Burly Plato shows an acute and acerbic awareness of Socrates' predilection for these bland pretty boys, including Plato's brother Glaucon, and one wonders whether his absence from his Socratic dialogues reflects his own experience of Socrates's inattention.) And then at last Socrates himself begins to speak, and from his lips we expect to hear the truth.

As always, however, the truth is elusive. Socrates claims to have learned everything he knows about love from a wise woman in the Arcadian city of Mantinea. That wise woman, Diotima, lays out a whole curriculum for the aspiring lover, who turns out in fact to be an aspiring philosopher, for "philosophy" by its very etymology means love of the highest order, the love of wisdom. Diotima insists, among other strictures, on the impossibility of real philosophical love between men and women, for she claims that their union is physical, designed to beget children (there was a matter-of-fact Greek word for this activity: *paidopoiein*, "child-making"). Real love, she says, can only occur between two men who eschew physical union for the "bringing forth in beauty" of pure Idea. At a certain point Diotima suggests that Socrates may already have reached the limit of his own capabilities in this course of instruction, but she presses on nonetheless to outline the loftiest exercises of philosophical love, until Socrates's whole spellbinding tale of her conversation is brusquely interrupted by the appearance of a party-crasher, the handsome, dissolute, and very drunk Alcibiades, who plops himself down beside Socrates on the dining couch and proceeds to steal the show.

Alcibiades insists, words slurred by drink over and above his characteristic lisp, that love is like Socrates himself: superficially ugly, internally beautiful, capable of total concentration, passionately physical, yet capable of denying all physicality. Meanwhile we realize that the deft puppeteer Plato has put the most ineffable reaches of his philosophy in the mouths of a woman and a drunk, neither of whom has undergone the rigorous manly training that Diotima had been earnestly prescribing to Socrates before the drunk interrupted the report of their conversation. And yet (and this must be Plato's point), despite their shared lack of a good introductory course in love and philosophy, both the woman and the drunk have seen God's truth.

Did Plato really believe, then, that men should spend their time undergoing the course of study that Diotima prescribes, to "bring forth in beauty"? If he did, then the structure of the *Symposium* does a remarkable job of exploding that curriculum's persuasive power by bringing on a drunken pratfall at its climax, with timing—and a sense of risk—worthy of an expert comic. And should it not arouse at least a glimmer of suspicion that a wise woman is yarning on and on about women's incapacity to understand the higher reaches of philosophy when that woman clearly lives parasangs beyond the understanding of Socrates, proverbially the wisest of men? Whatever Plato was about, his realm of Ideas was located far beyond the confines—social, intellectual, and political—of the Athenian society that also included (or better, perhaps, confined) people like Neaira, Stephanos, and Apollodoros. And there is no greater proof than the fact that his ideal Republic—unlike theirs, or the Golden Age Athens of Pericles—would grant women equal rights with men.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Neaira's life, in fact, is the extent to which she was able to achieve a status comparable to that of a respectable Athenian matron—this achievement, after all, is the charge that Apollodoros was trying to level against her. The odds ranged against her bid for respectable domesticity were all but insurmountable. She had been brought up in an expensive brothel in the sophisticated port city of Corinth, and in her early twenties she was sold off in a time-share arrangement to two of her steady customers for three thousand drachmas. This was five to ten times the usual asking price for a slave, and it was one thousand drachmas more than the two partners would ask of Neaira herself the subsequent year, when, both on the verge of proper marriages, they offered her the chance to buy her freedom. They made only one stipulation aside from the steep price: she would have to leave Corinth for good. Neaira purchased her freedom with the help of gifts and loans from other former clients, including an Athenian named Phrynion, who took her home with him as his mistress. But Phrynion was a brute, and soon Neaira left him to set up house in the neighboring city of Megara, apparently continuing to practice her lucrative trade as a professional "companion." Here, two years later, she first met Stephanos, an Athenian widower with three children, who decided to take her back to Athens with him.

Yet Neaira's troubles were far from over when she moved back to Athens: Phrynion learned of her return, and accused her successfully of making off with some of his possessions, and unsuccessfully of being his fugitive slave. The settlement of this suit compelled her for a time to split her residence between the households of Stephanos and the unsavory and abusive Phrynion; why or how this arrangement ended goes unmentioned by Apollodoros and therefore remains a mystery. There were other lawsuits as well; Athens was a litigious city, and Stephanos proved an eager contributor to its litigations. Hamel shows how contemporary politics as well as social mores played a role in shaping Stephanos's and Neaira's continuing legal struggles and those of the children to whom Neaira acted as adoptive mother. Each child would eventually face charges of illegitimacy, and although none of those charges would stick in a court of law, the shame and the trauma of these successive trials,

Immediate Song

Words on a sheet,
screen in a window,
air moving in

where he doesn't move.
Still, in the quick world
he catches the light

as it slices across
the eucalyptus,
spirals of dry green

inscribing the sky.
Morning splits open.
He is taking it in:

smell of spiced dust
sharp in the old smog,
river of traffic

constant and varied,
cool hiss of sprinklers
spurting to life

just now, springs—a back door,
jay's shriek that clears out
all space around it

a moment, a moment.

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as Hamel suggests, must have been considerable in this most public and most shame-driven of societies. Pericles himself had been driven to shed tears in public when the Athenian assembly refused to legitimize his children by his non-Athenian mistress Aspasia.

The last lawsuit that Neaira and Stephanos faced, to our knowledge, is Apollodoros's great tirade against Neaira, and, as Hamel shows, the case went to trial before a jury because of a technicality that looks particularly cruel to contemporary eyes. Stephanos and Neaira could have avoided an open trial by submitting their household slaves to interrogation about their marital status, but the interrogation of slaves in the ancient world meant torture, for slaves were believed to be incapable of telling the truth of their own volition. There was no guarantee that under intolerable duress—slaves, as mere property, were shown no mercy under torture—their own slaves would insist that they had never lived as citizen husband and citizen wife. Instead Stephanos and Neaira chose to run the risk of a public exposure that has lasted well over two thousand years.

HAMEL'S TREATMENT OF THIS complicated story is outstanding not only for its comprehensive (yet remarkably concise) presentation of the social and historical context of fourth-century Athens, but also, perhaps supremely, for its tact. By presenting sex and the ancient Greek sex trade forthrightly, she puts to shame the ponderous cuteness and leering euphemism that writing about Neaira's case has aroused in many classicists over the centuries. She brings out both the sordid exploitation of Neaira's circumstances and the genuine strength of the bond that linked this former prostitute with Stephanos and his family, piecing together a plausible account from what is often minimal evidence, managing to explore her human characters without idealizing them, and judiciously staying just shy of a historical novel. Her description of court procedure, and the differences that separate ancient Athenian standards for legal procedure and basic justice from our own ideas of democracy and the rule of law, show how much has changed in the definition of these powerful words over the millennia. It is easier, after reading her account, to see how the full imperfection of the Athenian political and legal system could have driven Plato to such savage fury against "the school of Hellas" that he established an academy of his own and gave up a literary form, tragedy, sponsored by the Athenian state, for a new dramatic genre of his own, the philosophical dialogue, in which he would insist on the pursuit of pure good and pure justice.

Hamel responds to the same injustices as a historian, presenting them clearly and with a minimum of expressed judgment. Yet her choice of topics and the order in which she presents them shows, time after time, that she measures the trial, its circumstances, and its protagonists by an affectingly human scale, so that in her account the potentially prurient story becomes, in its way, a tragedy. As Aristotle's *Poetics* recommends for tragic protagonists, Stephanos and Neaira are people who are neither better nor worse than average, whose griefs have come about by some symptom of that basic imbalance that afflicts the real world. They awaken our pity at their troubles and our fear for the violence, injustice, and instability of the world in which they, and we, live out our lives.

What Stephanos and Neaira seem to want most from their own existence can be described in the same two words that begin Aeschylus's *Agamemnon,* and hence the whole towering trilogy of the *Oresteia: apallagê ponôn*, "release from trouble." We do not know whether Neaira and Stephanos found that release after Apollodoros and the Athenian jurors were done with them. The verdict of Neaira's trial does not survive. While Hamel demolishes Apollodoros's case with objectivity and rigor, we cannot be certain that the jurors shared her perspicacity, though we can safely take for granted that they judged the case on the basis of radically different beliefs about men, women, justice, sex, politics, and religion. What we do know is that after this moment, Stephanos, Neaira, and Apollodoros disappear from our surviving records, and for two of them, at least, no news may well have been the best news of all. ■

Richard Jenkyns
The Air Painter

TURNER
By James Hamilton
(Random House, 496 pp., $35)

JAMES HAMILTON TELLS US THAT this summer, at the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute in Williamstown, the visitor can see together two of J.M.W. Turner's paintings of ships in troubled seas, *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying—Typhon Coming On* and *Rockets and Blue Lights (Close at Hand) to Warn Steam-Boats of Shoal-Water.* It is, he adds, the first time that they have been united since Turner first exhibited them in 1840. In fact, Hamilton has spoken too soon: *Slavers* will not be shown at Williamstown, but since, by quirk of fate, both paintings have long been in Massachusetts (*Slavers* at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, *Rockets* at the Clark Institute itself), the determined connoisseur can see them in pretty close succession. Turner worked on these pictures simultaneously, and it would surely have been a gain to see them again side by side, less for being variations on a theme than for the contrast between them.

One shows the glare of a watery sun piercing the clouds, and both show the reflection of sunlight on the disturbed waters (for Turner was, as Hamilton nicely remarks, "the greatest painter of sunlight that the world has ever known," and he would not leave the sun out of even the most cataclysmic tempest), but in tonal character they are radically different. *Slavers* is dominated by the "high" colors, the hot reds, yellows, and whites that were so distinctive of Turner's style at this stage of his career; *Rockets* is based on blue, green, grey, and brown, the more traditional tones of landscape painting, but transformed by his unparalleled blend of passion, turbidity, and exaltation. Together these canvases exemplify not only the energy of Turner's imagination, but also its range.

To see a painter's work collected in

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one place is a searching test of his quality. And it is not superficial variety that counts. At the great Vermeer exhibition a few years ago, no one felt that this artist was repeating himself, painting the same old interior over and over again: each work seemed a new and profound exploration of human and physical reality. Whereas Vermeer worked very slowly, Turner was immensely prolific, but the vast Turner exhibition held at the Royal Academy in London in the 1970s did not suggest that he spread himself too thin. It was, instead, revelatory. The final room provided an experience that was perhaps unique. The canvases seemed not to reflect light but to generate it; the walls of the room seemed to dissolve into an incandescent liquefaction. No one had painted like this before Turner, and no one else has been able to do so since.

As it happens, Turner can more readily be seen in bulk than any other comparably great painter. Since he bequeathed all the paintings and drawings in his possession to the English nation, his development from youth to old age can be traced in room after room of Tate Britain, including his most radical and visionary works. At Petworth House in Sussex, one may enjoy another perhaps unique experience. The visitor can look out through the vast baroque windows at the park, landscaped by Capability Brown, and then flick his eyes sideways to versions of that same view, reported and transfigured by the hand and mind of a great painter. Last year Petworth afforded a further treat—an exhibition of Turner's gouache sketches of the interior of the house, made in 1827 and rarely seen since. One would hardly guess them to be by Turner, though it is hard to imagine who else might have done them. And when and where might they have been made? Paris in the 1930s? It is difficult to describe the delicacy and the wit (not perhaps qualities one associates with Turner) as well as the dash of these enchanting little pictures. One might compare the lightly sketched, attenuated figures in these scenes to Raoul Dufy, except that it does no justice to Turner to liken him to a minor master. What these sketches possess above all—it is hard to explain it—is the sense of an interior, of light and tone within enclosed space. And this from the painter who was supreme in the representation of limitless extent.

In many ways Turner can be compared to Beethoven, who was four years his senior. Both were small, stocky men with interestingly ugly faces, of humble birth and difficult temperament, surly, passionate, abrupt. Both seem to have had a strong sexual drive, but neither married or seemed capable of marriage. Both were recognized very early as men of genius and continued to be revered, however much they might puzzle their publics in their later years. Each began with work in an eighteenth-century manner but kept developing and re-inventing himself; and yet with each the work as a whole conveys a sense of overriding unity, despite the length of the road traveled.

We all know about Beethoven's three periods; and it is interesting that Ruskin was analyzing Turner, during his own lifetime, in similar terms, identifying a "second style" between 1820 and 1835 and a third period from 1835 to 1845. Each of these artists has a "late style," and each evolved finally into a kind of timelessness, apparently transcending the limits of his age. Stravinsky remarked that the *Grosse Fuge* was absolutely modern music and would be modern forever. Many of Turner's last works could have been painted yesterday. Indeed, we might be tempted to say that they could not have been painted in the 1830s and 1840s, but for the fact that they were. It seems somehow absurd to think of these as early Victorian pieces, coming out of the world of *The Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist.*

It is entirely inadequate to say that Turner anticipated Impressionism, for he is more radical—more even than Monet in his final phase, three-quarters of a century later. He painted Norham Castle recurrently throughout his life, first in the 1790s, as a topographical watercolorist of the eighteenth-century type. His last painting of the scene, *Norham Castle, Sunrise*, is possibly the most liquefied representation of landscape that he ever made. John Walker, formerly the director of the National Gallery in Washington, once wrote that Turner had brought this picture to such perfection that another stroke of the brush could only spoil it—and yet he was nagged by the worry that it was unfinished. Observing that rivulets of blue paint trickle down the cliff in the middle of the picture, Walker felt unable to believe that Turner had anticipated not only Abstract Expressionism but even Pollock's finest hour. Yet people who saw Turner at work, as Hamilton tells us, noticed some of the strange ways in which he slapped his pigments onto canvas.

Despite their modest origins, their bearishness, and their air of glowering rebellion, both Beethoven and Turner liked the company of aristocrats and were liked by them in turn. Hamilton gives a good account of Turner's two most important such friendships. One was with Walter Fawkes, a member of the Yorkshire upper gentry, warm-hearted, improvident, public-spirited, progressive in politics. The earl of Egremont at Petworth was a different sort, very rich, very grand, a Tory and an enlightened landlord, a denizen of *la haute bohème*: the father of a string of bastard children, he was reputed to share his home with them and their various mothers. Not only did he buy a good number of Turner's works, he also commissioned a couple of Sussex scenes to be built into the paneling in the grandest of his staterooms. Hung with portraits by Holbein and Van Dyck, and decorated with limewood carvings of near-miraculous richness and delicacy by Grinling Gibbons, this was already one of the most gorgeously fitted rooms in Europe; but Egremont thought it could do with something more. In last year's exhibition, there were on display in the house both the paintings that Turner originally provided and the modified versions that were actually installed. The comparison suggested that the boldness of Turner's first thoughts may have been a little too much even for his unconventional patron.

We must be struck by Turner's imaginative courage in beginning to re-invent himself in his mid-forties. The poet, the novelist, and the composer need to keep finding new themes and inspirations, but the painter can go on painting portraits or façades of Rouen Cathedral more or less indefinitely: that is his luck, and also his temptation. Turner had more prosaic reasons, too, for not startling his public. He was prosperous, but he had no inherited wealth, nor did he have a practice as a portrait painter to fall back on, and indeed he was reputed to be tight with money. His new style was marked by the bold, even strident use of red and especially yellow. "In all," declared a testy critic in 1826, "we find the same intolerable yellow hue pervading everything, whether boats or buildings, water or watermen, houses or horses, all is yellow, yellow, nothing but yellow, violently contrasted with blue." A kindlier voice, in the same year, called him "the author of gamboge light."

Hamilton attributes the change to

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Turner's visit to Italy in 1819: it "changed his life," he writes, "and changed his art." What Hamilton does not consider is that some of Turner's paintings might really deserve adverse criticism. It took Turner a while to master his new manner, and there are a few works at this time in which the coloration and composition do seem lurid and theatrical in the wrong way. It was part of his bravery to experiment without the certainty of success.

Inevitably, we now see Turner as one of the great precursors, but this can be misleading. There is a paradox about the prehistory of modernism that appears in music as well as the visual arts. Wagner's deliquescent harmonies seem to prepare the way for the dissolution of tonality, and yet they rely upon the tradition of tonal progression for their effect, for we need to sense that those dissonances "ought" to resolve and are failing to do so in order to feel the formless, fluid yearning that the music seeks to convey. Turner and the Impressionists after him seem to lead on to those painters whose art ceases to be representational altogether, and yet their work is more intensely concerned with representing the physical world than ever. Ruskin interpreted Turner as, in effect, the supreme realist, the man who had penetrated more deeply into the truth of nature than anyone else. This way of seeing Turner still seems essentially right.

SHOULD WE TRY, THEN, TO FIND meanings in his pictures? Hamilton, a sensible and sensitive critic of Turner's paintings, is tempted at times in this direction. And it cannot be denied that Turner himself gave some encouragement to this approach: on occasion he would attach lines of verse, often composed by himself, to his paintings. In the case of *Slavers,* Hamilton claims that the worst of the storm is over, but he is compelled to admit that this contradicts the painter's own title. He also asserts that the dying slaves "raise their hands in gestures of triumph." But the verses that Turner supplied to accompany the picture, from his fragmentary magnum opus, *The Fallacies of Hope,* again conflict with this:

> Before it [the typhoon] sweeps your decks, throw overboard
> The dead and dying—ne'er heed their chains
> Hope, Hope, fallacious Hope!
> Where is thy market now?

Surely Turner has the better understanding of his own picture. The only slave whose body can be seen at all is being dragged head downward into the sea, apparently by carnivorous fish; one leg, with chain still attached, kicks up into the air. Elsewhere, some hands (rather poorly drawn) can be seen just above the surface of the water. These last gestures of the drowning do not look like gestures of triumph. They look like frenzies of desperation.

Maybe Hamilton is right to moralize this work, and has merely found the wrong moral. Still, one may feel some unease with the whole approach. A part of the unease concerns this specific picture. *Slavers* was extravagantly praised by Ruskin, who owned it at one time: he called it "the noblest sea that Turner ever painted" and declared that if he had to rest Turner's reputation on a single work, this would be the one. Splendid though it is, it seems to me some distance below Turner's greatest. But, this judgment apart, there is some mismatch between the horror of the notional subject and the comparatively small part that it plays in the picture space. This is essentially a seascape, and one that revels in the magnificence of stormy skies and waters; it is a picture that is enjoying itself. If I were to draw any moral from the painting, it is that human horror can co-exist with extraordinary physical beauty.

More generally, the trouble with extracting a meaning, or at least too specific a meaning, from these works is that it may cramp the experience of looking at them. Take the most famous of all Turner's pictures, described by Hamilton as "one of the best known and best loved paintings of all time": *The Fighting Temeraire, Tugged to Her Last Berth to Be Broken Up, 1838.* The grand old wooden warship, which had fought with Nelson at Trafalgar, looms behind the modern tug, whose tall iron funnel belches black smoke into the serene air; an orange sun, fierce and yet calm, draws near to its setting over the sea. The picture can suggest all sorts of emotions, from sorrow to triumph, in ways too evident to need spelling out; it can be enjoyed purely as a sky-and-seascape of extreme beauty; we can understand the scene as symbolizing the old ship's passing, or as exemplifying nature's indifference to human concerns. This is what Hamilton says about the picture:

> It brings together and balances fact: sail and steam, air and water, past and present, setting sun and new moon; it balances qualities: old age and the new, dignity and presumption, silence and noise, steadiness and urgency, the temporal and the eternal; and it balances geometric forms: the horizontal, the vertical, and the diagonal.

That is well put (even if one might quarrel with a detail or two). The especially telling words are "balance" and "fact." Turner presents; and he leaves a large space for the spectator's own meditation and imagination to expand.

Hamilton writes attractively, apart from some bits of perky slang to jolly the reader along. He comes to his subject as a student of art, and as a biographer he can be insouciant. He is oddly vague about Sarah Danby, Turner's mistress at one time and the mother of his two daughters. Not much is known about these women and how Turner dealt with them, but more is known than Hamilton lets on. He ends dramatically at the moment of Turner's death, and this means that he must leave out the grand funeral in St. Paul's Cathedral, which proved how highly Turner's contemporaries regarded him. The young Turner's art grew out of two strands of tradition, which he fused and transcended: the topographical picture (often in watercolor) and the melodramatic or Romantic sublime. Hamilton is excellent on the first of these, but he seems hardly aware of the other. His book provides two things well: a history of an artist's career, told through description and analysis of the paintings themselves; and a lively picture of Turner's personality and his immediate circle.

Though he is not greatly concerned with the wider context, Hamilton does draw the contrast between Turner and his contemporary John Constable. The restless Turner was constantly rushing across the Continent, to France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, in search of subject matter, while Constable was content to go on exploring the modest landscape and the shifting skies of the Stour Valley, on the border of Suffolk and Essex, where he was born. Yet their differences are enclosed within a larger unity, one that links them also to the Romantic writers of their time, and indeed to the descriptive writing of Ruskin and the poetry of Hopkins later in the nineteenth century. Both are men for whom, to borrow Pater's phrase, the visible world exists. They are intensely concerned to study nature, to see it truly and to interpret it, simply for its own sake, because it is there. ■

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BRASÍLIA DIARIST

Sexual Healing

Although President Bush has pledged $15 billion to fight global AIDS over the next ten years—an impressively generous sum, assuming his tax cuts don't swallow up the money before it's spent—he clings to a very specific idea about how AIDS-prevention money should be spent: on teaching abstinence. That's why he and his supporters constantly talk up the success of Uganda. Ten years ago, 15 percent of the country's population had AIDS. Today, just 5 percent do. And a major reason for the drop is an AIDS program that conforms to White House notions of propriety. As Ari Fleischer explained recently, Uganda puts "an emphasis where emphasis belongs, which is on abstinence."

A few weeks ago, I got a glimpse of a very different AIDS success story—Brazil's—when officials there arranged a tour for a group of journalists. The Brazilian initiative dates back to the 1980s, and it is perhaps best understood through some of the public service commercials that have aired on television since then. In one, dancers from Carnival, costumed in ancient Roman garb, remind viewers that condoms have a long, distinguished history: "In Rome and ancient Egypt, no one knew who they slept with. Marco Antonia used to wear it. ... Cleopatra demanded and believed in it. ... Hey, put on a condom." Another spot you might describe as "Father Knows Best" meets "Queer as Folk" takes place in a suburban home and preaches the virtues of tolerance toward gays as well as safe sex. Some ads play out like soap operas, such as the one in which a man cheats on his wife, picks up the AIDS virus, then gives it to his spouse. This commercial, too, promotes condom use.

It's easy to see why Bush and his conservative supporters don't talk about Brazil. But its results have been impressive. Brazil estimates that just 600,000 of its citizens are HIV-positive today—about half of what the World Bank had predicted. The death rate from AIDS has fallen, too—by more than 70 percent in the last decade.

Of course, there's a lot more to the story than just condoms. As in most of the developing world, few Brazilians have enough money to buy the antiretroviral drugs that keep AIDS from becoming a death sentence. Nor could the debt-strapped government afford to finance those purchases on its own, at least as long as the drugs were available only at market prices. So, a few years ago, Brazil announced it would break existing patents and manufacture generic versions domestically if the drugmakers didn't lower their prices voluntarily. Once the Clinton administration dropped its threat of trade sanctions against Brazil—threats made at the behest of the drug industry—the pharmaceuticals gave in. The United States agreed to recognize that developing countries had a right to break drug patents in order to fight a deadly public health crisis, while the pharmaceutical companies discounted a few medications. As a result, today every Brazilian who qualifies medically for AIDS therapy can get it. (Even more impressive, a recent study in the journal *AIDS* suggested that the rate of HIV-positive Brazilians who have developed resistant strains of the virus compares favorably to the United States and most of Europe. That would mean Brazilians aren't just getting the drugs; it would mean they're taking them properly, too—proof that, contrary to the assertions of pharmaceutical companies, patients in less developed countries can be counted on to follow the rigid regimen the medications demand.)

Brazil's progress is particularly remarkable given its government's inability to combat both the country's vast economic inequality and its truly frightening rate of violent crime. And, given that 75 percent of the country is Catholic, it's no less amazing that the population has countenanced such frank talk about sex—and that the aggressive response dates back even to the epidemic's early days, when it primarily affected gays and prostitutes. But the Brazilians I met all found this state of affairs normal. The Brazilian wing of the Catholic Church has a long history of progressive views—in part because its lineage lies with the Portuguese Church, always more open-minded than its Spanish counterpart. More important, though, Brazilians seem unusually determined to separate church and state—or, at least, religion and public policy. Brazilians don't want public health policies that pretend people don't have sex, sometimes promiscuously, nor do they want government moralizing. So they're happy to let elected officials mandate sex education in the public schools, distribute clean needles to drug addicts, and even underwrite a condom factory in the Amazon. (Brazilian officials are particularly proud of the condom factory, which they tout as a policy trifecta: It fights AIDS; brings jobs to poor, rural communities; and saves the rainforest, since latex is harvested from live trees.) When I asked Paulo Teixeira, director of Brazil's AIDS program, about political resistance to such initiatives, he seemed positively baffled: "No federal official has ever lost a job because of offending public sensibilities on sex."

Alas, that's not the case here. Just ask former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders, forced out in 1994 for discussing masturbation. Even today, that sensibility undermines U.S. policy on AIDS. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) threatened to rescind its funding of a San Francisco program called STOP AIDS. In order to attract more participants, the organizers mixed in some "better sex" tips with "safe-sex" talk, prompting religious conservatives to attack it as promoting promiscuity. As an office ostensibly dedicated to science, the CDC should judge programs strictly on their results. But the STOP AIDS decision is part of a wider campaign to audit all federally funded AIDS-prevention programs and steer them toward abstinence training. Never mind the studies suggesting the limits of that approach in the United States—or that, even in Uganda, it hasn't been quite the elixir conservatives would have us believe. The White House has its own story about AIDS. And it's sticking to it.

JONATHAN COHN

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Are Deficits and Interest Rates Related?

Ken Judd is the Paul H. Bauer Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

As the federal government once again begins to run large budget deficits, some have begun to express fears that interest rates could start to creep up. Should we be concerned?

There are two reasons that deficits may raise interest rates. First, the law of supply and demand argues that an increase in the federal government's demand for credit will push up the price of credit. Second, an expanding national debt may spark fears in the credit markets that the Federal Reserve will print additional money to cover some of that debt and thereby produce inflation. Although both arguments have some merit, their significance has been exaggerated.

The federal government is a large debtor. It currently owes its public creditors about 3.5 trillion dollars, and it may add another trillion or more in this decade. This sounds like a large increase, but it must be compared to the total credit market in which interest rates are determined. There is an enormous amount of debt in the United States. Businesses owe about 7 trillion dollars, and state and local governments owe another 1.5 trillion dollars. Home mortgages total nearly 8 trillion dollars. Moreover, mortgage borrowing grew by 4 trillion dollars over the past decade without triggering interest-rate increases. Other consumer debt totals 1.6 trillion dollars. Thus, **although the federal debt is large, it constitutes only 12 percent of the total debt owed by U.S. debtors.**

Furthermore, the U.S. government is only one player in a large and rapidly growing world market. For example, foreign investors financed much of the new borrowing by Washington in the 1980s, thus averting the interest-rate explosion predicted by some critics of Reaganomics. Although the federal government is the largest single player in the world's credit markets, its debt load offers only a fraction of the complete picture. A one- or two-trillion-dollar increase in federal debt will have a small, if any, effect on interest rates.

Creditors also demand higher interest rates if they fear that the Fed will use inflation to finance the new debt. Although many countries have resorted to inflation in times of fiscal distress, these fears are not justified today. First, the United States is not in fiscal distress. U.S. debt is only a third of its ten-trillion-dollar annual national income, a small ratio by international standards. Even fiscally conservative Germany has debt equal to 60 percent of its national income. **The strong U.S. economy and fiscal system make it possible to finance a much larger national debt without resorting to inflation.** Second, the Volcker and Greenspan regimes at the Federal Reserve have given the United States a credible, low-inflation monetary policy. Credit markets are less worried about future inflation because the Fed did not resort to inflation during the large deficit years of the 1980s.

These arguments are supported by statistical studies, which consistently find that low interest rates are mostly affected by inflation and that any tendency of deficits to raise interest rates is small or nonexistent. There are many important fiscal policy issues regarding deficit spending. Fortunately, interest-rate worries should not be among them.

— Ken Judd

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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